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SHORT STORIES
A WEEKLY MAGAZINE FOR HOME AND TRAIN

No. 613. FOR WEEK ENDING SEPTEMBER 29TH, 1900. [ONE PENNY.

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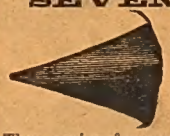

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SHORT STORIES

No. 613.] [ONE PENNY.

For the Week Ending Sept. 29th, 1900.

PIERROT.

The Story of an Innocent.

AT the foot of a big frowning mountain which for ages has stood like some doughty sentinel, refusing to leave his post, there nestles the quaintest and neatest of all the villages of southern France.

It is not a large village, but is too small to appear on the maps. History does not mention it; fame has not visited it; but it is a very happy little village for all that, and the simple peasants who live in it are contented with their home, and proud to have been born there.

If once in a while a tourist happens to pass through the place, and admits that he has never even heard of their village or the great *château* above it, or even of the fine monument of polished marble which the inhabitants point out with pride as marking the grave of a hero second only to the great Napoleon himself, they shake their heads in pitying astonishment at the crass ignorance he displays.

What! Never heard of Pierrot, their own Pierrot, who was so brave and noble and good? Was it possible!

And here Misette, who proudly asserts that she was named for the hero's young mother, clatters out in her neat wooden *sabots*, and, as the most venerable woman in the village, is accorded the honour of telling this wonderful story to the stranger, while all the other village women, with their round-faced, solemn-eyed brood, cluster eagerly around and listen with reverent awe, although they have heard the tale many times before.

Mère Misette is somewhat garrulous in her story-telling, and intersperses her remarks with pious ejaculations and apostrophes to the many virtues of their own Pierrot.

"An Innocent, M'sieu, as you may see by the words on the monument; but a very wise boy, for all, and a shining example to these lazy, worthless know-nothings!"

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It happened, oh! long ago, in the golden days of the First Empire, when all France was bubbling over with joy, after many months of boiling over with rage. All the village took a holiday when Gustave and Misette

Pere Milleux came to her as she sat crushed and grief-stricken by her recent discovery.

were married, and all the village wept as one man when the happy couple departed—Gustave proud and radiant, Misette blushing and happy—to "live at the great fort where Gustave's regiment was stationed."

All the maids in the village were more or less openly envious of Misette, not that they did not love her well, or honestly own that she was the gayest and prettiest of them all, but then Gustave was a soldier, very handsome and tall and straight, and wore so beautiful a uniform. He could tell the most marvellous tales, of war and fighting too, until one's flesh would fairly creep with the delighted horror.

Their own more prosaic lovers were quite cast in the shade when Gustave made these all too brief and infrequent visits to his old home; and Pepin, the vine-dresser, and Antoine and Pierre, who worked so industriously in the quarries, felt dreadfully overshadowed and not a little aggrieved when the gay soldier came and absorbed everybody's attention, holding all the village spellbound by his account of how he had actually seen the emperor face to face.

But, when, not a year afterward, Misette returned to them, a desolate and broken-hearted widow, refusing to be comforted, because her merry, loving Gustave had been ordered to the front and cruelly killed in battle, and even his poor mangled remains denied her, being buried hastily, then and there, with many others in a great trench, pretty Marie sobbed from the very depths of her tender little heart, and thanked the Holy Mother that her own Pepin was but an humble vine-dresser, instead of a fine soldier, as she had once wished and all the village wept for sympathy with Misette, and mourned the loss of their gallant soldier.

The days were long and dreary enough for Misette, after that; but soon a little comforter was sent to gladden her eyes and warm her poor numb heart—a tiny, round-eyed baby, with such loves of dimples, and a mite of a nose which looked like a mere dot in the middle of his funny wrinkled face.

He was never romping or naughty, like other children, but would lie quiet for hours at a time, staring with unblinking eyes at the warm blue sky, and making no noise except an occasional gurgling coo.

Misette was charmed, delighted, with such exceptionally good behaviour. Was there ever such a wonderful child as her Pierrot, and would not his father have been proud of the blessed little angel?

Ah, his father! Misette would weep a little at the memory, and hug her Pierrot more closely, as she remembered the gay, brave soldier.

As the child grew older, Misette would sometimes see her kind neighbours look at him in a puzzled way, and then pityingly at her, and shake their heads silently, or even furtively dash away a tear.

She was perplexed for a while at this strange behaviour, for her fond mother-heart could not yet realize what they saw all too plainly—that no gleam of human intelligence lit up the big brown eyes, as wistful and pathetic as a dog's; but, when the time came for the child to talk, and reason a little on his own account, it slowly dawned upon her that something was lacking.

Père Milleux, the good Priest, came to her, as she sat crushed and grief-striken by her recent discovery, and laid a kind hand on Pierrot's chestnut curls—the pretty, tousled locks that hid no actively working mind.

"My daughter," he said, with loving sympathy, "God is good. He sent thee a beautiful child to sustain thee in thine affliction. Now, when thine heart would revolt against His divine will, remember that He does no thing without a wise purpose, and, if thy little Pierrot is an Innocent, be assured that it is because He wishes to use this helpless one for some great good. Be comforted."

Misette bowed her head meekly before the holy man, and said:

"It is the will of God."

But still in her heart she mourned bitterly, and, before another year came, she died, bequeathing her Innocent to the care of the village.

They accepted him as a sacred trust, these simple peasant folk, who knew little of the intricacies of law and government, but ever followed the dictates of their own honest hearts.

The child made his home with all of them, wandering at will from house to house, always welcomed, always cared for tenderly and lovingly, and given a generous

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share of the poorest meal, because he was an Innocent, their poor Pierrot.

As time went on, he grew into a tall, strong boy pitifully simple and childish in his tastes and amusements, but always faithful and loving to his kind friends, and more than delighted when he could be of some little service to them.

The little children loved him, and clung to their Pierrot with unlimited trust and confidence. Possibly they may have felt, with dim, childish intuition, the mute appeal that always shone in his dull, patient eyes, but they could not realize, and would not have cared if they had, that those eyes were hopelessly vacant, and that he would never be more than a child. They knew that he was an "Innocent," because they had heard their elders say so, but he was their own dear Pierrot, and that was sufficient for them.

Pierrot was happy in the love of little children and dumb animals, and in the beautiful summer land in which he lived. He took immeasurable delight in the great *château* which towered above the village, about a mile away, and he would hover about the deserted grounds for days at a time.

The *château* had been closed and empty for many years, but to Pierrot it was indeed a fairy castle, and almost as wonderful in its loneliness as though it had been thrown open and filled with a brilliant throng of guests.

When he saw workmen busy on the grounds one day, and was told that the grand marquis was coming there for the summer with his lady and their little son, the Lord Montalembert, and all their retinue of servants, his ecstasy knew no bounds; and this feeling the entire village shared with him.

When the long-expected day came when their lord should arrive, they decked themselves in gala attire, and clustered, all agog with eagerness, along the road by which the marquis and his retinue were to pass through the village.

It was a day long to be remembered. Did one ever see such a fine gentleman as their own marquis, or such a sweet and beautiful lady as his wife? Such a handsome, merry little boy, too, was the young lord, who threw coins out of the carriage-window, and shrieked with laughter to see the children scrambling for them, and who thanked Pierrot so politely—the sweet young gentleman—when his fine cap fell off in the dust, and Pierrot picked it up and handed it back with awkward shyness.

Pierrot took him on his broad shoulders and strode patiently along.

Ah! that was indeed a wonderful procession, with servants enough for a king at least, dressed in the most beautiful coats, all aglitter with fine gold lace. It formed a topic of conversation for years.

The next day the marquis rode down into the village with his son, attended by two very erect and stern-looking grooms.

The little lord's face was sparkling and eager at the queer things he was seeing, so different from the sights at his city home, with which he was so familiar.

The wonderful marquis was good-naturedly resigned. He would never have ridden down into the commonplace little village that morning, if the young Lord Montalembert had not coaxed and teased to be taken again to see those funny peasant children and the big boy who had picked up his hat, and, on being refused once, had screamed his displeasure in so terrifying a way that the delicate nerves of his lady mother had been quite shaken.

Madame la marquise had been very, very ill, and they had come to this quiet place for the absolute rest she could not get in any of their gayer homes; but, if the young lord was going to scream like that, she might as well be in Paris itself. So the young lord had his way, as usual, and now, from the back of his shaggy pony, he hailed Pierrot with delightful familiarity:

"I say, come here!"

Pierrot shuffled slowly forward, a big awkward figure, grinning in sheepish delight at the honour conferred upon him, and stood looking at the smart velvet suit and jaunty cap his lordship wore.

Lord Montalembert, on his part, was looking down at Pierrot's bare brown legs and feet.

"Do you never have to wear shoes?" he asked, looking back to his own dantily-shod foot with a dissatisfied air.

Pierrot looked mystified, and shook his head.

After a moment his dull face brightened, and, looking up at the small figure of the seven-year-old horseman, he said in the confidential tone of one who is sure of the efficacy of his charm:

"Rabbits! Bird! Want to see?"

Lord Montalembert was a very human little boy. He slid down from his pony in a twinkling, and was ready to start before his father could interpose a word.

"Come on," he said, peremptorily, and Pierrot went, nothing loth, while an admiring knot of villagers followed at a respectful distance, vowing that there never was

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such a fine, frank little lord as theirs. He was a merry, imperious little gentleman, sadly spoiled and accustomed to his own sweet will, but with a warm childish heart under all his velvet and lace ruffles. He went to Pierrot as the village children went to him—with a childish trustfulness that this was a friend, a *bon camarade*, in spite of mental deficiencies.

He was charmed with the two shy little rabbits, one of which was promptly given to him and carried back to the *château* by one of the dignified grooms, who looked dreadfully distressed over his wriggling charge; but Father Crow, with his one lame foot and his knowing wink, was a treasure such as all the great shops in Paris did not contain.

His father smiled to himself, and waited with commendable resignation until his son should be through, listening the while most courteously to what Père Milleux had to say about the dreadful leak which let the rain down in Grandmère Gabrielle's cottage, and made her dependent on her neighbours for shelter.

Père Milleux was quickly satisfied with the promise that a carpenter from the *château* should mend the bad roof, but it was quite another matter to persuade Lord Montalembert to leave the novel society of his humble friends.

Not forty paces below the little lordling lay—unconscious or dead.

That afternoon the marquis said to his lady:

"Our son has made a particular friend of that halfwitted boy in the village—the Innocent, I believe they call him—and seems to prefer his society above all things."

"He is fine fun, anyway," broke in the little lord in loyal defence of his new friend. "He knows all about trees and birds and things, and everybody likes him. He is ever so much nicer than cousin Victor. Come, *chère maman*, you will let him come here often and play with me?"

His *chère maman* stroked his cheek with her thin fingers, and smiled down into his eager face.

"From all that I hear, your Pierrot will be a safer companion for you than any groom or tutor we could employ."

That was Pierrot's golden summer. Wherever the little lordling wished to go, he followed like a faithful dog, guarding him from danger and fatigue, and looking after him in a thousand other ways. His plantive brown eyes would brighten at the first glimpse of the slender little figure in its black velvet suit and gay red sash, and the beautiful buckles on his shoes.

Like all summers, this one drew to a close.

Pierrot grieved silently when he was made to understand that within a few weeks his little master and playmate must leave him. He should be so lonely now.

He went up to the beautiful *chateau* quite early one day, and so heavy at heart that he did not see the agile little figure darting behind the shrubbery, until it sprang out with a great "Boh!"

"Come, Pierrot," coaxed the little lord, in his most insinuating tones, "take me over to the quarries. Jean says they are blasting to-day, and I wish to see it so badly. Besides, I shall not be here much longer."

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Thus artfully adjured, Pierrot obediently started, and his small companion danced and chattered along by his side, singing gay songs and eating the sweets that he had purloined to fill his own and Pierrot's pockets.

The way to the great quarries was very long, and soon the little legs grew dreadfully tired. Pierrot took him upon his broad shoulders, and strode patiently on.

They had arrived on the outskirts of the quarry, and stood by the side of a huge block of marble, which had long rested there on the mountain side, when suddenly there was a great roar and rumble, and the ground rocked beneath their feet.

Pierrot knew that it was only the blast, although he cowered and trembled, being ever afraid of a loud noise, but the little lord, who had never heard it before, shrieked in affright, and, starting to run, tripped over a root and fell headlong, with a single sharp cry of:

"Pierrot!"

Pierrot started frantically after him, his teeth chattering in terror and anxiety lest his little charge be killed. Then he stopped and whirled round, as he heard a noise behind him.

The shock had loosened the great block of marble, and it was slowly tottering, as though uncertain whether to go tearing and rushing down the mountain side, or stay where it was.

Directly in its path, and not forty paces below, the little lordling lay huddled in all the brave finery of the velvet suit and red sash, one little foot twisted under him. Unconscious—or dead? Whichever it was, in another moment the pretty slight figure would be cruelly, remorselessly crushed under the awful weight that threatened to crash down upon him.

All this Pierrot saw, with his dull senses sharpened by love and peril, and as quick as a flash he had leaped under the tottering mass, and crouched at its base.

He had often seen the workmen put huge wedges under a block to steady it, and, as there was nothing better near enough, the wedge this time must be his own strong awkward body.

The great stone wavered a moment, and then settled, with a grinding, crunching, horrible sound, on human bones and flesh—settled and stayed, its delicate equilibrium restored.

Awful thrills of agony shot through Pierrot's crushed and tortured body. He could still see the figure of his beloved playmate and friend, now sitting up and looking around him in a dazed way, and sobbing a little because his leg hurt so, and because Pierrot had deserted him.

Then a merciful God sent kindly oblivion to Pierrot, and, with the last twinge of anguish twisting through his limbs, he dropped his head, and slept.

* * * * *

When a band of workmen came past an hour later, they found the little Lord Montalembert lying there with a broken leg, while scarcely forty paces above him, holding back destruction with his own body, now crushed and mangled to an almost shapeless mass, lay Pierrot, the Innocent, his white face turned in a last look of wistful appeal toward the child he had loved so faithfully and so well.

"Now was he not a remarkable boy, M'sieu?" asks Mère Misette, triumphantly, while all the women wipe their eyes sympathetically over the pathetic tale they have heard innumerable times. "There's a real hero, now! How many of your great men would have done it, eh? Easier to stand in front of a bellowing cannon M'sieu, than to crawl under a mountain of marble and have all the life *cr-r-r-ushed* out of one," rolling her "r" with such fearful effect that the round-eyed children quake with fear.

"And this is the superb grave stone the marquis had cut out of the very block that killed him—did you ever see a finer piece, M'sieu? And, when Pierrot was buried, everyone came from miles round, and the little lord, the sweet young gentleman, sobbed as though he had lost a brother. Madame la marquise, too, wept all during the beautiful sermon Père Milleux preached for Pierrot, and the marquis himself wiped his eyes. Ah, it was a grand funeral! He was indeed a brave lad, was our Pierrot."

And the stranger turns with new interest to the polished marble shaft, and bows his head reverently over the grave of a hero.

James Roberts.

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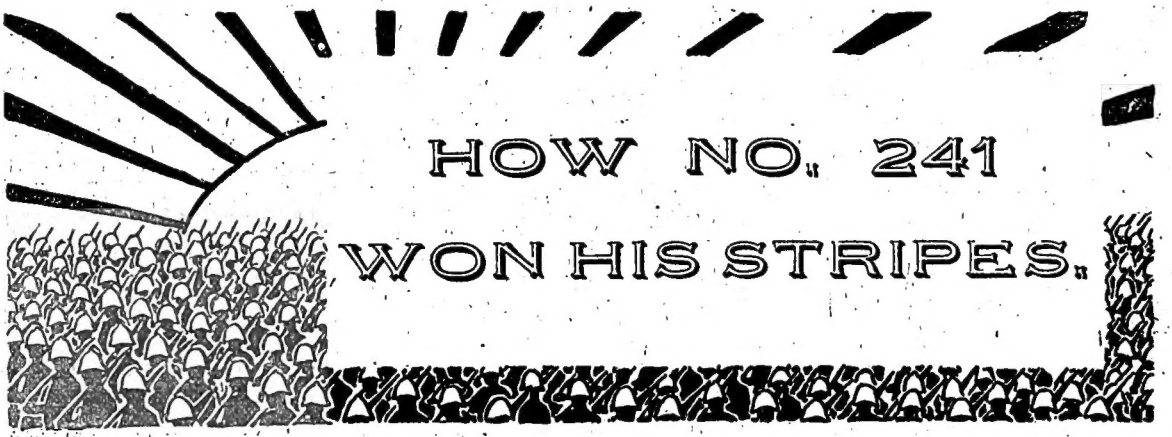

CONSTABLE JOHN DIXON, Z Division, No. 241, was young and good looking. Constable Dixon was also ambitious. One stripe decorated the arm of his official coat already, and the goal of that ambition was to multiply that stripe by three.

The constable had other yearnings, chief of which was the desire to make Mary Hackett, the pretty housemaid at "The Cedars," Mrs. John Dixon, but this was also contingent upon the stripes.

Mary had more than once hinted at her willingness to content herself with the tunic as it stood, and the limited pay connected therewith, but John was wiser, and resisted the temptation; for in addition to being ambitious, he was likewise conscientious.

There was a feeble old woman living down in the country, to whom the loss of the few shillings weekly, her son sent her out of his pay, would have been a very serious loss indeed.

A constable's wage is not a very extravagant amount, and what remained to John, after his mother's allowance had been sent, would have sorely puzzled even those wise-acres, who write descriptive articles on "How to Keep House on £50 a Year!" to plan out into sufficient for the bare existence of a married couple.

So for the present, John possessed his soul in patience, contenting himself in the interim, while waiting for those extra stripes, with taking Mary an occasional Sunday trip to a bread and butter and shrimp tea at Gravesend, *viâ* the penny steamboat, to the gallery of a theatre, when his "night off duty," and her evening off happened to correspond, to say nothing of a frequent ten minutes chat at the front gate, under the shadow of the trees, which gave "The Cedars" its name.

Constable Dixon had not been long in the force—somewhere about four years—but thanks to his intelligence, and a natural aptitude for the work, he had been very successful. Thanks too, to his former experience as a farm hand, he had not that rooted objection to a wet jacket, or a cold corner, peculiar to the ordinary police officer, consequently he was always to be found upon his beat.

The result of all this was that No. 241 was trusted by his officers, and reckoned by his colleagues to be in a very fair way of promotion, an opinion in which John himself coincided.

In fact, from what the superintendent had recently let drop, No. 241 believed that the next "good case" which fell in his way, would get him the coveted step. From this it may be gathered that when on duty, John kept his weather eye open.

So it came about that on a certain evening of a certain week, when the road in which "The Cedars" stood, happened to be included in his beat, and John likewise happened to be passing, a seedy-looking individual, who after furtively watching the constable down the road, entered the grounds, did not escape his observation.

No. 241 had only caught a glimpse of the man as he slouched by, but there was something about his close-cropped head and peculiar gait, which, to the obs rvant constable, seemed to bear the hall-mark of Portland or Dartmoor.

The family at "The Cedars," which consisted of Mr. Adolphus Rosenberg—a Hatton Garden diamond merchant—his wife and daughter—were out of town for a day or two, so with the exception of the servants the house was unprotected.

Mr. Rosenberg, who was somewhat eccentric in his habits, frequently kept a large quantity of valuable gems in the house, preferring to have them under his immediate eye, at his private residence, and suffer the inconvenience of conveying them to and fro to Hatton Garden, which more than once has been the scene of extensive robberies.

John had observed the man's movements, and his suspicions were therefore at once aroused.

The police-officer who desires to get on, is no believer in the adage "Prevention is better than cure!" So affording the supposed burglar sufficient time to get to work, and chuckling as he went at the thought of giving Mary an ocular demonstration of his prowess, and with a passing glance at his left arm, upon which in his mind's eye he already saw those additional stripes, No. 241 stole back towards "The Cedars."

As he neared the gate, walking slowly—for official "brogues" are not the most noiseless footgear in the wo ld—he heard low voices on the other side of the wall.

So there were two of them, he thought. An entrance into the house had not yet been attempted, probably because the servants had not retired to bed—the hour was ten-thirty.

John stopped and listened.

"Now take care of yourself for my sake, if not for your own, Jim! And whatever you do, don't let John Dixon see you. He is on this beat, and as likely as not he'll be passing directly."

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"Is Dixon a tall, smart-looking chap—clean-shaven—darkish?".

"Yes."

"Then there's no fear, for I passed him going down the road."

"That's all right! But you'd better go, one of the other servants might come out."

"Right! So long, old girl! See you again in a day or two."

"Yes. Good-night, Jim, dear!"

Then there was the sound of a kiss, and the man issuing from the gate, and catching sight of the lurking figure of the constable, abruptly took to his heels.

No. 241 was too dumfounded by what he had overheard to follow, even had there been an excuse for so doing, which, as far as he knew, there was not.

The stranger had evidently not entered the grounds with any nefarious design, or rather not with one which brought him within reach of the law—for the voice which John had heard in conversation with him was Mary's, and what to the miserable lover told its own tale, the kiss, which he had heard exchanged, was with Mary, too—Mary, upon whose faith, John would, a minute ago, have staked his life.

Before passing condemnation, the law mercifully gives the suspected one the benefit of the doubt. John decided to do likewise, and throwing open the gate, found himself face to face with a trim little figure, looking very attractive, the poor fellow thought, in her black frock, with its white collar and cuffs, her white muslin apron, and natty little cap with its broad white strings.

"Good gracious! How you startled me, John!" she cried, emphasising the fact with a start.

"So it seems," he rejoined, shortly.

He had thrown the light of his lantern upon her, and instead of the usual smiling face, it had shown him one strangely disturbed.

She held up her head for the customary salutation, but John, forgetting his resolution of a moment earlier, thrust her at arm's length.

"Who was that man who has just left you?"

"What man?"

The question was evidently but to gain time, and her lover scorned a reply.

She gave a half-hysterical little laugh and went on:

"Oh, you saw him, then, did you? Did you see his face?"

"No!"

"Ah!"

There was something of dismay, something of relief in the exclamation.

"Who was the man?" he repeated sternly.

"Oh, nobody in particular"—and she seized his arm and endeavoured to peer up into his face—"Why, surely you're not jealous, John?"

"Oh no, not at all! Why should I be? I'm only curious to know who the chap is to keep so carefully out of my sight."

A little catch came in her voice.

"He's only—someone I knew years ago—an old——"

"Sweetheart, I s'pose!"

"No indeed!"—reproachfully—"Only there are reasons why I don't want you to see him. But there's no harm in them."

"And no harm in your kissing each other either?"

"No, John! Truly there isn't!"

"Ha-ha-ha! What a fool you must take me for! Now for the last time, lass," and in his agitation he gripped the girl's shoulder so fiercely that she winced, "will you tell me who he was?"

She hesitated, then replied slowly:

"I—I can't, John—there!"

He drew a deep breath. His face flushed darkly, and he abruptly snatched away his hand.

"Then I'll tell you my opinion on the subject. You're getting tired of waiting for me, and wondering whether I'll ever get my stripes. Like many another of your sort, you think it's as well to have two strings to your bow, in case one fails. Well, I don't intend to be one of 'em any longer."

She went very pale, and her apron, which she was twisting and untwisting, began to tear, still she answered quietly enough.

"Then you mean to break off with me?"

"I do."

The answer came through his clenched teeth.

She sighed heavily.

"You'll regret it by and bye."

"I'll chance it, my girl! In the meantime, I wish you joy of the other chap, for if he isn't a goal-bird, then I'm as big a fool as you've tried to make of me,"—with which startling affirmation, No. 241 turned upon his heel and strode away, leaving Mary sobbing violently.

Despite John's firm resolution to think no more of his—as he supposed—faithless sweetheart, he found the task he had set himself was not one easily learned; and a week or two later, while striving for strength, he was guilty of very great weakness.

Patrolling past "The Cedars" in the small hours, he was seized with an irresistible desire to open the gate and steal into the grounds, which proceeding was merely to give himself the painful satisfaction of staring up at the window of Mary's sleeping room, where perhaps, at that very moment, so he told himself, she lay dreaming of his rival.

The servant's apartments overlooked the back of the house, and thither, treading noiselessly over the soft turf which bordered the paths, No. 241 made his way.

He had expected to find the house in darkness, but to his intense surprise, in one of the lower rooms he saw a light.

John rubbed his eyes, thinking they must have deceived him, for he had no sooner perceived it, than it had gone. But suddenly it came again, and as before, as suddenly disappeared.

The constable's intelligence quickly supplied him with an explanation of the phenomenon. The light proceeded from a dark lantern, which was being used by someone within. A burglary was evidently taking place.

Instantly P. C. Dixon's senses were on the alert, and sinking the lover in the official, he applied himself to a search for the means by which an entry had been made.

He found them in the shape of a small window in the basement, from which a pane of glass had been removed and the catch forced back, in a manner which showed him that the man he had to deal with, was no novice at the work.

Making use of the same means, the constable entered in his turn, and removing his boots, crept upstairs.

On reaching the landing, he perceived a glimmer of light proceeding from a room he suspected to be the library in which Mr. Rosenberg kept his stock-in-trade.

Softly turning the handle, John stepped within and by the light of the lantern which stood on a convenient chair, he saw that the door of a safe stood open, while a rough-looking individual was kneeling before it, examining the contents.

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Alarmed by the faint noise of the constable's entrance, the man sprang to his feet, and uttering a fierce oath made for the door.

In shadow as the room was, as the burglar came towards him, John's recognition of him was instantaneous. It was none other than "his rival!"

A savage joy shot through No. 241's breast at the discovery, and as the man attempted to dash by him, John seized him by the throat, and after a sharp struggle—for the other was of powerful build—rolled with him to the floor.

There, until the constable's face came within the light of the lantern, the struggle, which was silent and deadly, continued, then the thief suddenly ceased to resist.

"Are you John Dixon?" he gasped.

"I am!" was the exultant reply, "and you are my prisoner!"

"All right! As it's you, I give in!" and quietly the man held out his wrists for the handcuffs."

"If it had been anyone else," he went on, "they should have made a 'stiff 'un' of me before I'd 'ave been took. But as it's you, I ain't sorry, for you'll get your stripes, then you and Mary can get married right away."

"What do you mean?"

No. 241 was so astonished by his prisoner's words that he not only omitted to handcuff him but released his grasp.

The other made no effort to take advantage.

"I mean if I'd been able to get clear away with the 'swag,' I'd have taken a trip across the 'Pond,' but as you've spoilt my chance of that, I may as well go back to 'chokey,' and do you and my sister a turn."

"Your sister?"

Dixon turned his lantern full upon the fellow's upturned face, endeavouring to trace out, in the crime-stained features some likeness to Mary.

The man gave a hoarse laugh as he observed.

"It's true—worse luck for her! I'm Mary Hackett's brother. You wouldn't think it to look at me, would you?"

John shook his head.

"A spell among the stone quarries soon works a change in a chap, and for the worse, most times. That's who I am all the same. Jim Hackett, the convict who broke gaol a month ago, and who your chaps have been looking for ever since. A bit of luck then, for you, ain't it mate?"

John Dixon made no reply.

He understood Mary's conduct now, and was bitterly reproaching himself for his want of faith—thinking what recompense he could make for his unjust suspicions—how make his peace with the girl he had wronged.

He quickly arrived at a decision. There was only one way. Jim Hackett must be allowed to go free. Grave breach of duty as this would be there was no other course. He could not, he told himself, accept promotion at the cost of the brother for whose safety Mary had been ready to sacrifice so much.

"Get up," he said, "and make your escape while you can. I can't take you, and what's more, I won't. Quick man, quick, someone is stirring upstairs."

Hackett bounded to his feet, and seizing the constable's hand, wrung it gratefully.

"You're a good chap, and if there were more like you, there'd be less like me. Tell Mary that whatever happens, Jim Hackett will go straight from this minute," and the burglar sped down the stairs.

A minute later an elderly man entered, carrying a lighted candle in one hand, and a revolver in the other, and in whom John had no difficulty in recognising the diamond merchant.

His eye fell upon No. 241, and an expression of relief swept over his face.

"A constable!" he ejaculated. "What's the matter? What's been going on?"

John pointed to the open safe.

"A burglary has been attempted, sir," he faltered, "but I don't think any damage has been done more than to the safe."

Mr. Rosenberg in his anxiety for the safety of his gems, failed to notice the constable's confusion.

"No! Nothing has been taken," he said, "but"—observing the disturbed state of the room—"there's been a struggle. Burglar got away, eh?"

"Yes, sir!"

"Humph! Well, as the diamonds are safe, that's a minor detail. You were quite right not to leave the room until someone arrived. Most officers would have troubled more about making a capture than saving the property. I shall certainly recommend your discretion to the authorities. In the meantime, take this!" and he thrust notes for a handsome amount into John's hand.

No. 241, being conscientious, made a half movement to decline it, at the same time feeling a strong inclination to avow his unworthiness of the praise which was being passed upon him.

But on second thoughts, he resolved to sleep over the matter, and also to consult Mary. He did both, and the result was, that No. 241 retained the notes, kept his own counsel, and in due time got his promotion—and his Mary; while Jim Hackett was never re-taken, and is now a useful member of society.

Had John Dixon been the creation of a novelist, he would have confessed his deriliction of duty, and been dismissed the force. Being a real personage, his conscientiousness had its limitations.

Hubert Bartlett.

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Unrehearsed.

THE Strand was at its busiest. The July sun beat down, mercilessly hot, upon men's heads. But of all the much-enduring throng the most to be pitied were the sandwich-men, a long dreary line of whom moved with sadly-solemn deliberation along the gutter-way of the great thoroughfare. Boards on back and breast, overhead boards carried high on shoulder-irons, announced the forthcoming early production, at the Theatre Royal Saint Georges, of a new play.

In itself this was no great novelty, although the title of the piece, *Bathsheba*, had about it a decidedly daring ring, while it certainly promised something out of the common in dramatic experiment.

But it was not so much that which they set forth, as it was one in particular of the twenty or so human derelicts themselves that irresistibly attracted att ntion.

Hunger-pinched, bowed of shoulder, his eyes seeking the ground, he walked as a man in a dream. Old he could not be, in spite of his iron-grey hair, and the bleached stubble of a fortnight's growth of beard.

There was something, too, altogether different to that of his comrades, in his garb, which evidently like its wearer, had seen better days, being well cut although woefullly shabby.

Just where Wellington Street runs into the main artery, continuing i s course over Waterloo Bridge, a block occurred in the road traffic, the long line of peripatetic advertisments halting in obedience to the uplifted hand of authority.

It was then that the man in question lifted his eyes for a moment, to meet those of a gentleman, of spic-and-span appearance, hurrying by from the opposite direction.

As hardly believing what he saw, the latter stopped short in sheer bewilderment.

"It isn't Eliot, is it?" he said in a low tone to the man in the gutter. "Heavens! it is, though! Man!" gripping him by the arm, regardless of the curious stares of the passers-by, "Come out of that infernal crowd! here, up this passage," half-pushing, half-dragging his companion into the comparative privacy of the Lyceum Pit Entrance. "Take off th se wretched boards," excitedly helping him in the process. "Throw them down there, anywhere! they belong to me. Now, tell me! Why don't you speak?"

The other leaned against the wall, reluctance and shame still seal ng his lips.

"Come, Eliot! we'll go into a quiet little restaurant I know of hard by, and over a bit of lunch you shall tell me just so much as you please, and how I can in any way help you."

"You are very good, Barker; as you will, I am incapable of argument or contention. But what about these?" pointing down to the discarded boards.

"Oh! never mind them. Here, you!" calling to the hindmost man of the string, just preparing to move on. "Go you up to the theatre, and tell them to send a boy for these. Sharp! say I sent you—Mr. Barker."

Within five minutes Eric Eliot and his friend were snugly seated in the little restaurant aforesaid, and then the former, under the influence of a generous and much-needed meal, told his tale.

It was an eminently sad one. He a wealthy man, had married a young girl, beautiful, but headstrong, vain and extravagant. Three years after the wedding-day his wife's repeated absences from home, her neglect, not only of himself, but of their one child, a wins me little daughter, together with an utter disregard of his financial position, now seriously involved, rendered necessary some de isive action on his part. This, however, was anticipated by her flight. No letter, no message gave him any clue to her intentions or whereabouts.

Two days afterwards he discovered that he was irretrievably ruined. Bills to an enormous amount came pouring in, and after making over everything to his creditors, and consigning his h pless little one to the care of an old nurse of his own, he left his West End home with a twenty-pound note in his pocket, and blank desolation before him.

This was two years ago, and all that he had undergone during that terrible period he would not say, his pride refused to stoop to a disclosure of mere personal privation, even to so genuine a sympathiser as Frank Barker. Sympathy, to such a nature, is always repugnant.

"And you haven't seen your wife since?"

"Neither seen or heard of her. But let us change the subject, Barker; as you may imagine, it is not one the most grateful fo me."

"I'm sorry, old man! I ought to have known that, but I'm really so wishful to be of some service to you that—well, what *can* I do for you?"

"Get or give me work of some, of any find. I want to earn a living. This," bitterly, indicating with his hand his back and breast, "is but death in life. A university man, and not, I think, a fool, I seem to be banned. People laugh and sneer, are sometimes downright insulting when I apply to them for employment, implying by their manner, if not by word of mouth that there must be something shady about me, or I should not be as I am."

"Hard! very hard! I know the kind of folk you mean. Pharisees every one of them. But let me make a

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suggestion. How would this do for a start? It so happens that I want an intelligent, trustworthy man to take the one supernumerary part in our new play at the St. George's. There is practically nothing to do, except in the great scene. The salary would be—well—four guineas a week. What do you say? Would it suit you?"

"Barker, your're a good fellow, but your're a bad dissembler. I know the market value of a super's services, that they are far and away below four guineas a week."

"Hang your scruples, Eliot! that's the worst of people like you, your confounded pride, and conscientious stickling for what you believe to be the right thing are always barring the way."

"Perhaps I oughtn't to have said that," said Eliot, gently, yet earnestly, "I beg your pardon, it certainly was ungrateful."

"Then you accept?"

"Yes, only too thankfully; tell me all about it."

"Not now, to-morrow, when you come to the theatre. Now, don't jump down my throat at what I am going to say, but subbing, you know, is a super's institution and prerogative, and so you must allow me to give you a week's salary in advance," laying the money on the table as he spoke.

"I'll take it," said Eliot, "because, in a way, I am going to earn it."

"To-morrow, then," said Barker, wringing the other's hand, as they parted outside the restaurant, "I shall expect you not later than eleven. Good-bye!"

* * * * *

The Theatre Royal, St. George's, is a fashionable house; in not exactly the traditionally theatrical quarter of the town, but upon the fringe of it. It was run by a man moving much in Society, and by a natural sequence it was upon the immediate patronage of Society that its fortunes depended. The plays produced upon its stage were of the drawing-room, chit-chat, and "exclusive" order, "caviare" to the multitude, but to the "elect" milk and honey.

The new play, *Bathsheba*, while mainly dealing with high life, was in the nature of a departure from accustomed and familiar fashion. It had a more serious "*metier*" than usual, and being written by a man whose views upon things social tended almost in the direction of the revolutionary, it was an experiment fraught with no little risk to the producer.

Eliot duly kept his appointment next morning, and was carefully coached in his duties, by stage-manager Barker.

The rehearsals of the piece were over, but as the super's sole entrance consisted only of the delivery of a card, and a message of half-a-dozen words, it was agreed that it would be all right upon the opening night, a week ahead.

It may be briefly premised that the scheme of the play was just a modern version of the old Biblical story.

"Bathsheba," said Barker, "is a woman who succumbs to temptation, the tempter, one Sir Guy Etheridge, being the prototype of King David. By the way Eliot, have you seen our new leading lady, Miss Sara Cleave?"

"No! I haven't been in a theatre for years."

"Well, she, of course, plays the title-role, and although she is a bit of a spit-fire, and confoundedly imperious, I think she'll make a big success in the part. She's only been upon the stage about a couple of years. You know, society beauty, separation, scandal, and all the rest of it; but she's an actress, and a fine one."

"A *rara avis!*"

"Quite. You're all right now aren't you? Ask for me when you come down to the theatre this night week, and make it as near seven as possible."

* * * * *

It so happened that Eric Eliot on the night of the production of *Bathsheba* was oppressed with a strange feeling of coming disaster. Whether it were the failure of the piece, or something more akin to his own personal interests he could not determine. Anyway, as he dressed the feeling of depression strengthened so much that, knowing that his presence upon the stage would not be required before the middle of the third act, he elected to remain quietly in the dressing room till called..

Every now and again could he hear distinctly the the roar of applause going up from a crowded and enthusiastic house.

Evidently the play was going splendidly.

In the course of about two hours Barker sent the call-boy for him. The first scene of the third act was near its conclusion.

"I haven't a minute," breathlessly said the stage manager, "look out for my signal to go on. You enter through that curtained archway, don't forget that."

"I quite understand," replied Eliot. "There's no fear, I think, of my making a mistake."

"That's all right, then. They're shifting the scene now! I must be off!" and he rushed away.

Impelled by a force he has never been able quite to explain, save that his heart must have been the prompter, he moved to where the heavy plush curtains of the archway hid him from the view of the audience. He could see the whole of the stage, though, distinctly.

Sir Guy was writing at a table. The actor playing the part was a man of five-and-thirty, or thereabouts, The character he was assuming, a blasé man of the world.

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fitted him like a glove. Among his professional intimates as also in the society in which he moved he was known as the "Butterfly." With a superlative self-opinion of his own powers of attraction and fascination, he was never without, at least, one string to his bow.

The new leading lady was his latest flame, and he considered himself as being fortunate in that the play demanded passionate love-making as between himself and Bathsheba.

Eric paid but little attention to him, he was looking, curiously expectant, for the entrance of the exponent of the title part.

Almost before he was aware of her vicinity, she passed him, brushing his feet with the folds of her dress. He saw a tall woman, of regal pose and figure, move towards the baronet at the table. Sir Guy turns his head, springs to his feet, and taking her in his arms imprints upon her lips a passionate kiss.

It was then that the watcher saw her face. He could not err. There was but one face in the whole world like that.

Convulsively grasping a moment at the curtain for support, his soul then leaped to life. With a cry that must have been heard across the footlights, he rushed through the archway towards the pair. Seizing the actor by the throat with one hand, and forcing back with the other the now pallid representative of Uriah's wife, the maddened man shook the pseudo Sir Guy, as does a terrier a rat, hurling him with a mighty effort sheer over the table at which he had been lately sitting.

All was now confusion and hurly-burly.

"Ring down! ring down!" shouted Barker, frantically.

With a crash the act-drop fell, almost crushing in its hurried descent the head of the actor, who had rolled perilously near to it.

Barker's next business was with Eliot.

"You've ruined me and the piece!" he cried.

Eliot stood, altogether oblivious of the manager's presence, gazing fixedly upon the face of the actress, who had not stirred.

She knew him, and all her former contemptuous feeling for him seemed to die away in the glory of his anger. It might be, too, that his sudden and unexpected appearance had much to do with this revulsion of sentiment. Happy, away from him, she had never been; now she would give anything, life itself almost, for one word of his lips, one touch of the hand from him she had so deeply wronged.

"Who is this man?" cried the actor to Barker, and painfully rising to his feet.

"Her husband!" said Eric triumphantly, moving a step nearer to Bathsheba.

A sudden gleam of glory and of hope illumines his face. He looks at her with his heart in his eyes.

Stealing up to him his wife places her hand timidly upon his shoulder.

"Eric! Eric! I did not know you cared so much!"

* * * * *

In a certain western suburb there live a man, his wife, and their little daughter than whom I know not a happier trio.

But a humble daily toiler in the great city, the man ever turns at the day's end, with brightened eye and eager step towards his home.

The woman who greets him is beautiful, but it is the beauty of a transfigured nature. And as the sun goes down it is upon a picture no wall could ever receive, because it is unpaintable.

RALPH.

THE LATEST CATCH PHRASE:

"Have You Got That Ten-Pound Note?"

Read the three startling new developments in the great ***Pearson's Weekly*** scheme.

DEVELOPMENT NO. 1.

FIVE TEN-POUND LADIES

have been dispatched all over the country. Each of them is, needless to say, very charming, and will give up the Sealed Envelope to the lady who fulfils the conditions mentioned in this week's ***Pearson's Weekly***. No gentlemen need apply.

DEVELOPMENT NO. 2.

It has come to the knowledge of the editor of ***Pearson's Weekly*** that there are many thousands of readers who, by force of circumstances, cannot leave their homes for any length of time, and who do not, therefore, enjoy the opportunities for coming into contact with the Ten-Pound Men who are at present wandering about the Kingdom.

Moreover, there are many thousands of people who do not care to approach strangers on the subject of the £10 notes. They are too modest and fear a rebuff.

In order, so far as it is possible, to remove the handicap placed upon such people, the editor of ***Pearson's Weekly*** has prepared a dainty little card with the words: **HAVE YOU GOT THAT TEN-POUND NOTE?** printed in scarlet upon it. All you have to do is to

PLACE THIS CARD IN YOUR WINDOW,

either that of a private house or that of a shop, and if one of the Ten-Pounders happens to pass along your street, and sees this notice, he will at once call, and upon your producing a copy of the current number of ***Pearson's Weekly*** he will hand you over a Sealed Envelope entitling you to the sum of £10.

Address a halfpenny post-card to ***The Ten-Pound Card Department, Pearson's Buildings, Henrietta Street, London W.C.,*** and you will receive one of these cards under cover and post free.

The cards contain full details of the Ten-Pound scheme.

DEVELOPMENT No. 3.

The latest song: "Have you got that Ten-Pound Note?" is being sung every night by ***Mr. R. G. KNOWLES*** in various London music-halls. Copies of the song will be ready on October 8th, and may be obtained at ***1s. 6d.*** each.

Ten-Pound Notes have already been claimed at London (Ludgate Hill), Norwich, Southend, Wimbledon, Southampton, Brixton, Lincoln, London (East Central), Worcester, and St. Albans, and there are still thirty others going begging.

Full particulars will also be found in ***Pearson's Weekly***, and fresh developments of the scheme appear in the *Daily Express* every day.

The original Sealed Envelopes by which claims have been made can be seen at the following places:

Mr. John Lotan's, Ludgate Hill Station; Mr. H. E. Baker's, offices of *Eastern Daily Press*, Norwich; Inspector Lee's, Cooper Brothers, Cliff Town Road, Southend; Mr. C. Wright's, Crown Hotel, Southampton; Mr. W. W. Tonkin's, Lang Sims, 437 Brixton Road, London, S.W.

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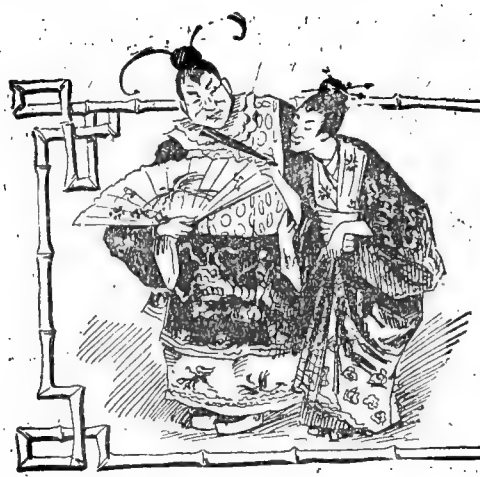


Mr. Bowser's Tribulations.

XXV.—He Exercises his Will Power to Stop Smoking.

Mr. Bowser came home to dinner the other night looking a good deal worried, but all of Mrs. Bowser's inquiries as to what had happened were put aside until dinner was finished. Then he made a considerable ado about pulling out his cigar case and breaking up three or four cigars and tossing them out of the back window. As he had been an inveterate smoker for fifteen years, and as he had treated the advice of friends and the family doctor with contempt, Mrs. Bowser had a right to feel a good deal of surprise at his action. As she looked at him in an inquiring way he crossed his hands under his coat-tails and fixed a stern gaze upon her and said:

"Mrs. Bowser, you behold before you a man of will power."

"You have decided to stop smoking?" she queried.

"I have. That is, I shall break off for a year and give my system a chance to throw off the nicotine. After thinking the matter over I have fully and firmly decided. It was smoking that ailed me all the time, but I was reluctant to admit it. It has given me about nine different diseases, but if I stop now and drink plenty of butter-milk I am in hopes to restore my health. Have you no congratulations?"

"Why, I think it a good idea, of course," she replied as she remembered fifty other occasions when he had come to the same decision. "Yes, it will be a good thing for you if you can only carry it out."

"If I can only!" he indignantly repeated. "Of course I can carry it out. All that is needed is the exercise of a little will power. I shall hanker for a smoke now and then, but all I have got to do is to stand firm. I should despise myself if I felt that I couldn't get the better of a habit."

Mrs. Bowser looked anxious, and the cat came up the basement stairs with a grin on her face, while Mr. Bowser sat down to his newspaper. He kept quiet for five minutes. Then he rose up with the remark:

"You bet I can stop smoking! If I thought I couldn't, I'd go and hang myself! However, as I don't want any sudden shock to my nervous system I think I'd better——"

"You'd better smoke half a cigar?" suggested Mrs. Bowser with a smile.

"Never. Do you take me for a fish-worm? I have stopped smoking for a year, and that settles it. I was thinking, however, that I might chew cloves or spice or something to divert my thoughts."

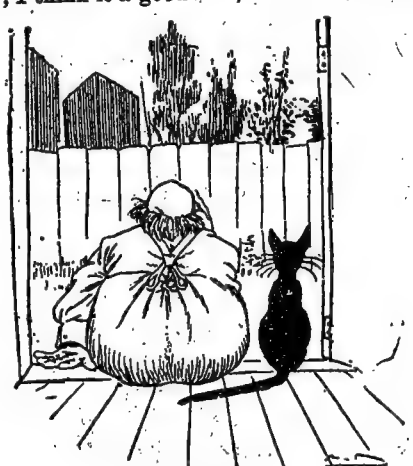
He went down to the pantry and got a handful of roasted coffee berries and then sat down for awhile on the basement stairs to call himself names for throwing away three sixpenny cigars instead of putting them away somewhere. The cat came and sat down beside him and plainly showed her sympathy, but at the end of five minutes he gave her a slap and ascended to the sitting-room to announce that he was going over to the chemist's for liquorice root. He was about to put on his hat when he noticed a smile on Mrs. Bowser's face, and he turned on her with:

"Oh, you are grinning are you? You think it will turn out as it has before, but I'll show you to the contrary. If I was told that my life depended on my smoking, I wouldn't take a single puff. After living with me another fifteen years perhaps you'll find out that I'm a man of my word."

"I have always known that you had great will power," she quietly replied.

"You bet I have, and I'll give you a surprise over this smoking business. They say that if you chew liquorice root it will take away the longing, but let her long and be hanged!"

During the next hour Mr. Bowser hunted the pantr



At the back door.

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for spice, cinnamon, nutmeg and other things, and he even went so far as to sprinkle a piece of raw cabbage with cayenne pepper and shed a liberal supply of tears as he worried it down. The consolation in each instance was brief.

As Mrs. Bowser watched him prowling about she knew what would happen sooner or later, but she was powerless to avert it. As he paced back and forth, his nerves on edge for a smoke, he suddenly discovered a hairpin on the floor. It was a cheap steel hairpin, costing about a fifth of a farthing, but it was enough to serve his purpose.

"Woman, is it any wonder that we are going to the workhouse at a gallop?" he demanded as he picked up the pin and held it out towards her with flushed face.

"It dropped out of my hair," she replied as she took it and found a place for it.

"Certainly it did, and if I hadn't discovered it it would have gone into the ash-bin where millions more have preceded it. Is it any wonder I can't save a penny in the year."

"Please don't make such a fuss about one cheap little hairpin. If I lost a thousand a year you wouldn't be five shillings out of pocket."

"It's not the cost of that hair-pin, but the principle of the thing. A wife who will waste hairpins will waste clothing and fuel and gas and provisions. If I wanted proof that you were a reckless, extravagant wife, that hairpin would be living evidence. I have borne and borne, but I tell you the limit has been reached!"

"If you had been smoking you wouldn't have noticed such an insignificant trifle," she said as he walked up and down and the cat took good care to keep out of his way.

"No, of course not!" he shouted. "If my senses had been steeped in nicotine my eyes would have been blinded to your extravagances. I have been your victim for years and years, but my eyes are opened at last. Beginning to-morrow morning, I shall take the full management of this house into my own hands and make a wonderful change."

On a seat in the back garden.

Mrs. Bowser was wise enough to make no answer, and as he descended to the basement to hunt for something more to chew she slipped upstairs.

He missed her when he came back, and he did not know whether to follow her and make a fuss about the last gas bill or to look over his papers with a view of applying for a separation at eight o'clock in the morning. The question was still undecided in his mind when the thought of a smoke flashed across his mind.

"No, never!" he exclaimed as he drove it out. "I am a man of will power. I have said I wouldn't smoke and I won't."

He had found a lemon on his last trip to the pantry, and he sucked away at it and mused:

"All I've got to do is to put my will to work, and I'll show Mrs. Bowser that it is the will of a Napoleon."

The lemon seemed to increase his longing instead of blunting it, and after exchanging it for a stick of cinnamon he mused:

"Still, the question arises if stopping so suddenly won't give the nervous system a shock? If I should reduce my cigars to two or three a day?"

A gleam of hope came to his heart and a smile to his face.

"Reduce to three a day at first, and then gradually to none at all. Of course, I could stop straight off from to-night and never smoke again. I've got an iron wi l——"

He suddenly remembered that he had a long, black cigar in the pocket of a coat hanging up in the cupboard—one given him by the family butcher as he paid his last bill—and he could hear his own heart beating.

Five minutes later Mrs. Bowser looked out of a back window and saw Mr. Bowser on a seat in the back garden. He was puffing away at that cigar and had the cat by his side. There was a smile of acute satisfaction on the face of each, and as she looked he slapped his leg and laughed and chuckled and said to himself:

"You may take it from me that Mrs. Bowser is one of the most careful and economical wives in this land, and if she wants five pounds pin money in the morning she can have it!"

M. QUAD.

Next week: "He Turns to Root Beer as a Family Tonic."

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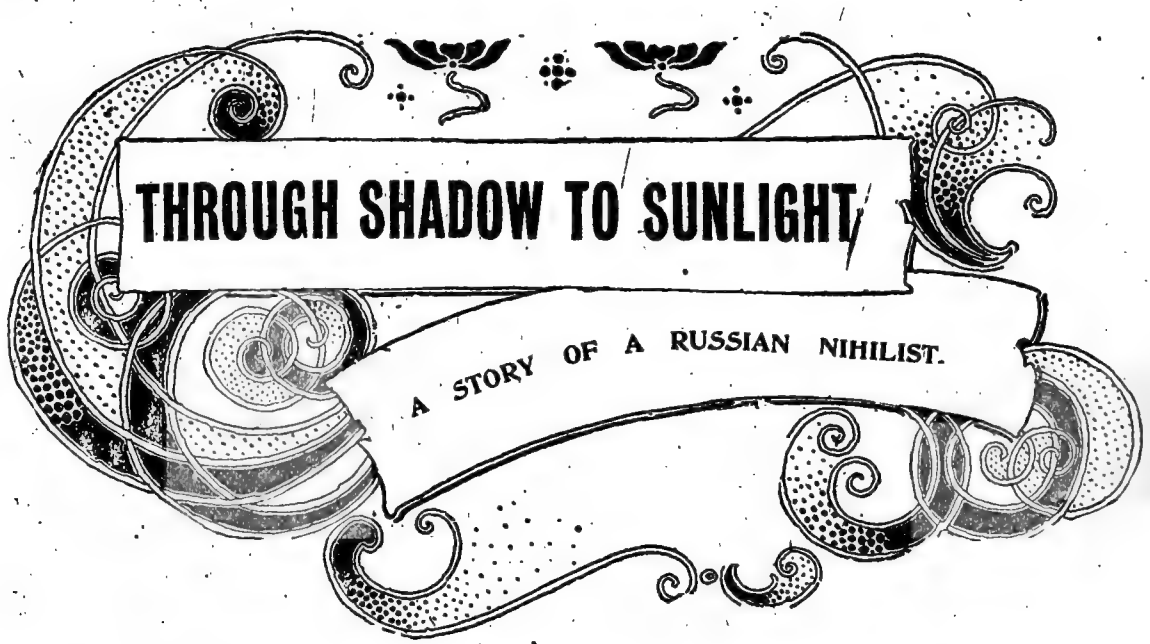

PARGITT'S PRIVATE DETECTIVE AGENCY.

THIS legend was painted on a top-floor window in a street off the Strand. Occupying a room with a blackened ceiling, and no decorative or superfluous furniture, sat the Firm. He was fat, rubicund of visage, and to the least observant eye an ex-police officer. With a look of elation he dipped a pen in the ink, made a mystic flourish, and wrote:

YOUR HIGHNESS,—Obeying your instructions I have made all necessary inquiries concerning Israel Baretsky, *bric-à-brac* dealer of Wardour Street. He is a man of quiet habits, and has no suspicious associates.

He is quite blind, and spends his Sundays near the Marble Arch, listening to Socialistic doctrines. Baretsky is a widower, and has a daughter nineteen years of age. Her name is Ziska, and she is of great beauty. I have also ascertained that nineteen years ago he came into collision with the Russian police at St Petersburg. He was then a member of a Secret Society of Nihilist tendencies. The head of the group was a certain Count Nouvoroff, a Polish nobleman. The police raided the club, upon which occasion the house was fired by the conspirators, the Count losing his life in the flames, and Baretsky his sight. So far as I have learnt Baretsky is now quite unconnected with any Anarchist group. With regard to his means, he appears to be in comfortable circumstances.

Waiting your further instructions,

I am,

Your Highness's

Most obedient servant,

JAMES PARGITT.

Descending the stairs the detective carefully deposited the letter in the nearest pillar-box.

During the day he received a reply.

Princess Sophie Manicheff has received Mr. Pargitt's letter; so far the information acquired is satisfactory. The Princess herewith incloses cheque for services rendered. Her sole object was to ascertain the respectability of Mr. Baretsky as a *bric-à-brac* dealer. Will Mr. Pargitt supplement his inquiries by calling upon Mr. Baretsky, and propose to him the purchase of Princess Manicheff's collection.

Pargitt smiled, but he was as discreet as he was ready-witted, and set off therefore, without delay, for Soho.

The cosmopolitan denizens of the neighbourhood had melted away to cafés and restaurants, and Wardour Street was well-nigh deserted. The shop, when the detective reached it, was in semi-gloom. Through the half-open door he saw into the inner room, where a light was burning. It revealed the blind dealer and his daughter.

Pargitt entered the shop. The slight noise he made was evidently unheard, and he stood for a moment in the shadow. The place was crammed with curios of every description, old helmets, French Liberty knives, bits of faded tapestry, ivory carvings, fans and pottery.

The detective rapped sharply upon the floor with his stick: "Shop!" he cried.

Ziska came forward and turned up the gas.

In a few words Pargitt explained the object of his visit. Whilst he was speaking Baretsky joined them. Save for his infirmity the dealer was a tall, handsome man.

"The name of the lady who wishes to dispose of her collection is Princess Sophie Manicheff, and her address is 171 Grosvenor Square."

The name of the princess had a curious effect on Baretsky. His hand went out, and touched a piece which stood upon an old cabinet. It fell with a crash to the floor. Ziska turned towards her father with a look of alarm. He was trembling violently.

"Father!" she cried, with affectionate concern, "are you ill?"

"No! no!" he said to her, striving to control himself, "it's only the heat, child."

Then to Pargitt:

"Tell the Princess that I will attend to her wishes to-morrow."

"Very well," replied the detective. "Good-night."

Pargitt walked down Wardour Street deep in thought. Coupling the conduct of Baretsky with the transparent "sole reason" of the Princess's letter, it was certainly

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suspicious. The instincts of the police-officer were aroused, and instead of going back to his den, he made for New Scotland Yard. He wondered whether a warrant under the Extradition Act (particularly with a reward attached) had ever been issued for the arrest of Baretsky for any crime against the laws of Russia.

* * * * *

The marriage of Princess Sophie Manicheff was a failure. The man of her romantic choice was a certain Count Ivan Nouvoroff, a poor Polish nobleman of good family. He was handsome, and everything that a fine manly nature should be; but being also a dreamer and a visionary, his altruistic ideas soon created a gulf between them.

Soon after the honeymoon the spirit not only of conjugal, but of political opposition grew to abnormal proportions. After a terrible quarrel, during which his wife upbraided him with neglect, disloyalty and a thousand other things which come so tripplingly from the tongue of an angry woman, a mutual separation was agreed upon; the Count taking charge of the issue of the marriage, a baby girl. Six months later she heard of her husband's death, during the raid upon the Nihilist rendezvous.

This tragedy seems to have melted the ice of the Princess's nature; she wept and mourned for him, devoting her whole energies to the search for their child, who, strange to say, disappeared the day after the Count's death. She had now pursued the quest for many years, and was at last, she told herself, upon the brink of a discovery, the possibilities of which startled even herself.

The day following the detective's visit to Soho, the Princess remained at home, anxiously awaiting the promised arrival of Baretsky. As the little French clock on the mantelpiece chimed eleven, the strain upon her nerves became almost unbearable. She turned to look at her face in a mirror, and there saw reflected the figure of a tall, graceful girl, who must have entered without sound.

The unexpected always happens, and in this case the surprise was startling and bewildering. Looking for the man who, she believed, could alone relieve her heart of its load of anxiety and maternal longing, it was only natural that the advent of someone altogether different would, at first, disappoint and depress her.

The first to speak was Ziska.

"Madame," she said gently, "you are the Princess Sophie Manicheff?"

Was it the voice of the girl, or was it something in the expression of her features, the poise of her head, the colour of her hair, that carried the elder woman's thoughts back nearly twenty years, to an ever haunting memory.

"Child," she said at length, with trembling lips, "Who are you? whence come you?"

"Madam," returned Ziska, wondering in her own mind at the other's strangely moved manner. "I am sent by my father, Israel Baretsky, of Wardour Street, to discuss with you the purchase of your Highness's collection."

"You!—a girl!—you!" exclaimed the Princess in amazement, surprised for the moment out of her self-absorption in her one great life theme, "What know you of such matters, or who taught you, a mere child? Tell me, why did not Baretsky come himself?"

"Madam knows," replied the girl deferentially, and yet with a sweet smile, "that my father is blind; but she does not know, perhaps, that his sense of touch is as eyes to him, and that it has enabled him to teach me, so that I can now be of use to him, while between us we can judge and buy, and sell."

"Marvellous! but I think, to save time, you had better, perhaps, go and see my pretty things. I will ring for a guide for you," suiting the action to the word

Ziska then left the room upon her visit of inspection. In a short time she returned. The Princess gazed at her long and tenderly, and then handed her an English Society newspaper, drawing her attention to a marked paragraph. It announced the approaching marriage of the Princess Sophie Manicheff with a prominent member of the Russian diplomatic service.

"Take this paper, and when you reach home, read this paragraph to your father," said the Princess.

With hungry eyes she watched Ziska from the window till she disappeared, and with a half-sob she cast herself upon a lounge.

"Pray God!" she gasps, "that my ruse may succeed."

That night the Princess did not attend any society functions. She sat alone in her room with the lamps unlit, waiting, listening, her heart wildly beating.

At last a name was spoken which brought her trembling to her feet. With panting breath she heard footsteps slowly ascending the stairs.

Their sound ceased, and she saw Baretsky standing in the gloom of the room. She stole to his side, and took his hand. "My husband!" she sobbed, "do you forgive me?"

The blind man put out his hand, which touched her hair.

"For years," he said, brokenly, "I have hidden myself from you, under the name of Baretsky. Now, only to save you from committing a great sin, have I, blind, helpless, and a burden sought your presence."

"But suppose," cried the Princess wildly, "that the report is untrue?"

The count dropped his hand, and moved backward a pace.

"If it be untrue," he exclaimed hoarsely, "why did you send the report to me?"

"Because," cried his wife passionately, "I love you! I am older, wiser, and I know now that my life is a waste without you."

"You shall have your daughter," said the Count sadly, "but I—I must go, Sophie."

"No! no!" she cried, "if you love me you will stay, and we will together take up the threads of life again."

* * * * *

Note (belated) from detective Pargitt to the Princess Sophie Manicheff:

> Your Highness,—I have just discovered that Israel Baretsky was killed in the fire at St. Petersburg, and that Count Ivan Nouvoroff has been passing under his name.

Telegram from the Princess Sophie Manicheff to detective Pargitt:

> I knew it long ago.
>
> Ralph Enderby.

THE MISTAKES WE MAKE.

Compiled by C. E. CLARKE, with Index.

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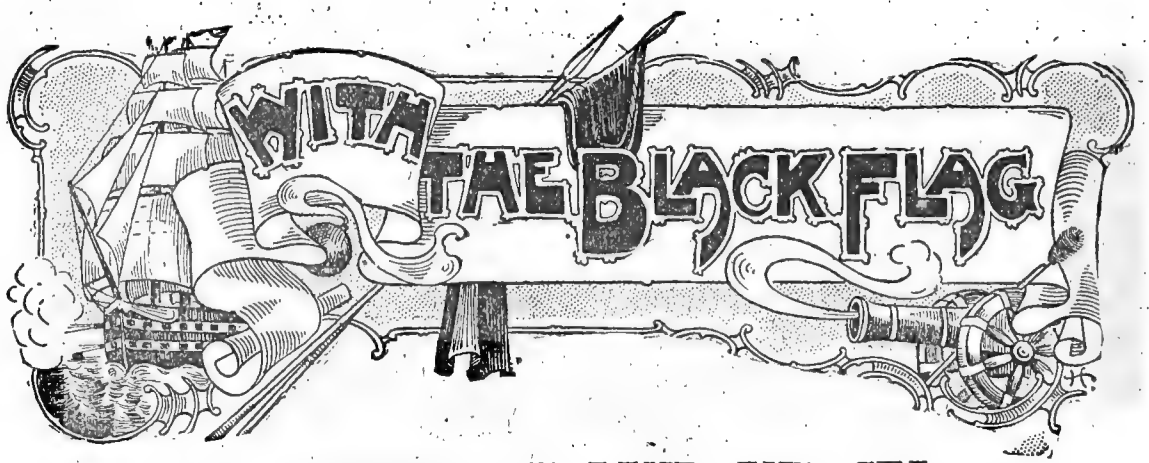

A ROMANCE OF LAND AND SEA.

By WILLIAM WESTALL.

Author of "With the Red Eagle," "The Phantom City," "Nigel Fortescue," etc., etc.

PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS.

Major Wyvenhoe, commander of an expedition which went out from England to help the Venezuelans in their struggle for liberty. He is intrusted with dispatches for delivery to Bolivar, the Supreme Chief.

Captain Cautley, who is in charge of the ship which took the expedition out.

John Ready, the servant of Wyvenhoe.

General Arismendez, ex-Governor of Pampatar and Vice-President of the Venezuelan Republic. He received Wyvenhoe and Cautley on their arrival in Venezuela.

Dons Iago Santleo, and Antonio Bonanza, two Venezuelans who accompany Wyvenhoe when he takes the dispatches to Bolivar.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE scene was wild and picturesque, and reminded me—with a difference—of the stories I had read about Robin Hood and his merry men.

The guerilleros and their guests were gathered round the fire, which, fanned by a light breeze, flared and roared like a furnace, sending forth showers of sparks that were like to make a bonfire of the entire grove, and had not rain fallen a short time before should have had a general conflagration. Even as it was I felt by no means sure that we might not have to run for our lives. But the blaze had the satisfactory effect of keeping all winged and crawling vermin at a respectful distance.

In the background the horses and mules, divested of their trappings, were browsing with good appetite, and on improvised spits were roasting the remains of the buck which was to form the *pièce de résistance* of our supper.

I suggested to El capitan, as the guerilleros called their leader, that the fire might be seen by the Godos, and inquired whether there were no pickets in the neighbourhood.

"The Godos have too much respect for their skins to venture forth at night when we guerilleros are about," he answered with a scornful laugh, "and they know that if they established pickets we should stalk them. They dare not post sentries at night more than a stone's throw from the walls, or even by day if there be cover within musket shot. You may go to sleep with an easy mind, señor, the Godos won't disturb your rest."

El capitan was evidently an embustero, yet I thought there might be truth in this, also that the favourable opinion Santleo had formed of the fellow was not without warrant. Though his ugliness was satanic his manner was straightforward, and he had not the look of a treacherous dissembler. But looks are not always to go by, and on the whole I would rather have been in other company.

The venison was served on palm leaves. We had neither bread nor salt and our fingers had to do duty for forks, but I was too hungry to be fastidious, and never did I more enjoy a meal or eat with better appetite. Presently the aguardiente began to go round, a raw, fiery spirit, of which we took no more than courtesy compelled, but it was greatly relished by the Zambos, whom we had hard work to prevent from getting drunk.

The guerilleros, however, drank copiously, and after a while started gambling, which before long led to quarrelling. Fierce oaths were shouted, knives drawn, and if Gonsalvo had not knocked a few of the roysterers down and threatened to brain the first man who broke the peace there would have been battle and sudden death.

Order being restored, quietness followed, and most of the men disposed themselves for sleep. I was so sleepy that I could hardly keep my eyes open, partly as the result of the long ride yet more of the enervating heat which had made me feel unspeakably somnolent and limp.

"Do you see that the Spanish deserter—I have ascertained that he is a deserter—and the mulatto with whom he has been talking so much are as wide awake as ever, and they drank next to nothing," whispered Don Antonio. "They must be closely watched, and Diego is fast asleep already. I shall take the first watch, Don Iago the second, and Ready the third, so that you may get a good long rest."

To this I objected as unfair, and proposed that I should take the second watch if not the first.

"No, let it be as Don Antonio says," urged Santleo. "Unless you have a good long sleep you will be ill. I can see it in your face, and that won't do at all. Besides, we are acclimatised and you are not."

"And I can pretend to be asleep yet keep awake all night," put in Bonanza.

I was too tired to insist, almost too tired to talk, so folding myself in my cobija I laid my head on my saddle-bag and was asleep almost before I could shut my eyes.

"Already! You might have given me an hour," I exclaimed when Ready roused me.

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"An hour! You have had nearly nine. It is nearly five, and the men are beginning to stir."

"But why did you not waken me sooner that I might take my turn at watching?"

"Don Iago and Don Antonio would not let me. They said you needed a long sleep. They did not waken me till past three."

"Where are they?"

"There, fast asleep."

I looked round. Fresh logs had been thrown on the fire, water was boiling in great pans made of bull's hide, the guerilleros were moving about, rubbing down their horses and seeing to their saddles and arms. Diego still slept, and I could see nothing of the deserter and the mulatto. But that did not trouble me. If they had intended to sell us to the enemy the peril was past; all were on the alert and daylight near.

"*Buenas dias*, señor!" said Gonsalvo, coming forward to greet me. "I hope you have slept well. Your friends are sleeping yet. Better awaken them. Breakfast will be ready in a few minutes, and we shall cross the river at sunrise."

"You also are going to cross the river then?"

"*Si*, señor, and it will be well for us to cross together. The Godos are less likely to attack a large party than a small one."

So El capitan was afraid of the Spaniards despite his boasting.

"I thought the Godos never ventured outside the walls," quoth I.

"I meant at night. They are bolder by day, and might send a detachment to intercept us at the pass, which is another reason for being well on our way before we can be seen."

On this I awakened the two dons and told them what had passed.

"That is the secret of our hospitable reception and handsome treatment. Gonsalvo wanted a reinforcement, and cutting our throats would have defeated his object," said Santleo, laughing.

After a hasty breakfast of coffee and tasajo (jerked beef) we mounted our horses and el capitan mustered his men.

"Two are missing. What has become of Calzada and Lucar?" he asked.

Nobody answering, he turned to Santleo and me, who were near him.

"I don't like this at all," he observed in an undertone. "Calzada came to us from the Godos only a few days ago. He may have gone back to them, and Lucar, who is a great friend of his, with him. Both of course knew that we meant to cross the Apure this morning. What do you think, señores. Would it be wiser to fall back towards San Juan?"

"In my opinion there is just as much danger in falling back towards San Juan as going on forward," said Don Iago.

"Anyhow, we shall go on," I added.

"And we will go with you," quoth Don Gonsalvo after a moment's thought. "As we are thirty well-armed men and the Godos know me, they may not molest us. But we shall have to look out. I never quite liked Calzada, and regret that I received him into the band." Then to his men: "We cannot wait for those two fellows. But one of you might look round for them and follow on. You, Laterro."

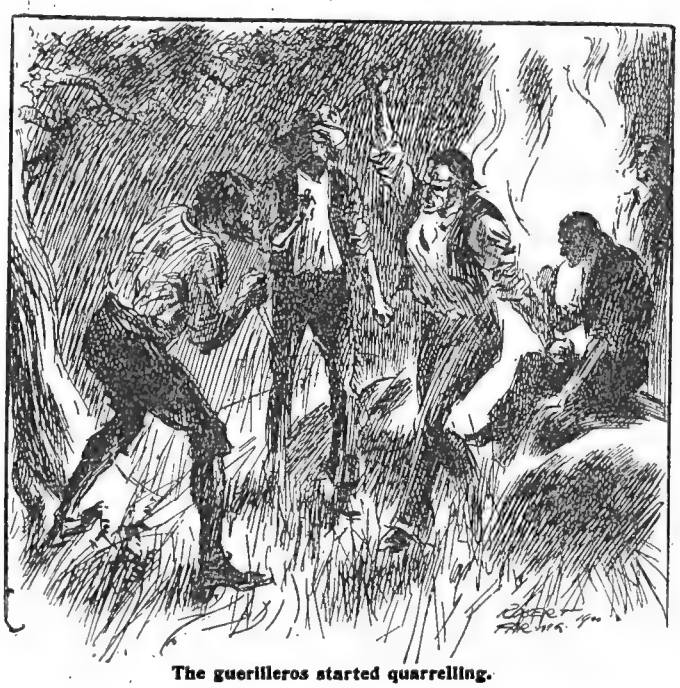
"*Si*, Señor Capitan, I will look for them," answered the man.

"Good! But you must not tarry long or you will have to cross the river alone. Now march!"

So soon as we were out of the wood we rode in twos, Gonsalvo and Soto, his lieutenant, first, to whom followed our party, Don Iago and myself leading.

It was still dark, and the sun would not rise for an hour.

"We shall be at the pass just in time, and must cross the moment we can make out the other side of the river, and if possible before we are seen by the Godos," remarked Gonsalvo as we emerged from the grove.



The guerilleros started quarrelling.

A pass in Venezuela is not necessarily a ford, rather a point where the stream runs between two ends of a trail and is accessible on both sides. Where the banks are steep or swampy, or covered to the water's edge with dense vegetation, crossing is of course impossible. The pass by which we were to cross the Apure was near San Fernando. Unless we found canoes, which was very unlikely, we should have to swim, not an agreeable undertaking even had there been no Spaniards to fear, for the river thereabouts swarm with alligators and caribe fish, the latter a species of diminutive demon shark, formidable by their numbers and ferocity. Blood has an irresistible attraction for them. They fasten on the slightest wound or cut, and will disable a horse in a few minutes.

We had ridden about half-an-hour, all smoking, for the benefit of the zancudos, which filled the air with their humming, when three or four vulture-like birds rose right in front of us and flew heavily away.

Gonsalvo pulled up in sudden alarm.

"Look! What is that?" he exclaimed, pointing to two dark forms that lay like logs across the track. "Dismount and see, Soto."

The lieutenant obeyed, and after he had examined them, kneeling, looked up.

"What are they?" demanded Gonsalvo somewhat impatiently.

"Two dead men, Señor Capitan—Calzada and Lucar. I cannot see their faces, but I know them by their clothing and their weapons."

"*Cien mil demonios!* The Godos have done this."

"I don't think so, Señor Capitan. The Godos would have taken them to be questioned by the general before execution. Besides, the Godos don't kill people in this fashion. Calzada's head is nearly severed from his shoulders and

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"They are two dead men, Señor Capitan—Calzada and Lucar."

Lucar's skull is split in twain. Only one expert with the machete could have done the work so neatly."

"Who then?"

"*Quien sabe?*" (Who knows). "Either robbers or *Indios brutos*" (wild Indians) "I should say."

"It is very strange. The two men could only have had one object in coming this way—to give information to the enemy, so they are rightly served. Shove the bodies on one side. You have good ears and sharp eyes, Señor Teniente. Ride ahead, and if you hear or see aught suspicious let me know."

"I also have good ears and eyes. I will go with him," put in Bonanza.

"Many thanks, señor. I shall be glad of your company," replied the lieutenant, and they rode off at the swift ambling run known as "pacing" peculiar to South American horses, which are never taught or allowed to trot and seldom gallop.

We others followed more slowly and reached the pass just as the sun rose fiery red, throwing a ruddy glow on the great rolling river.

"The coast seems to be quite clear, and if we are sharp about it may get over before the Spaniards get sight of us. We shall have to swim with our horses though, there are no canoes," observed Don Antonio.

So all went into the water, some riding, others, like ourselves, dismounting and holding on to their horse's mane, and gained the other side without accident. There was no blood to attract the caribe fish, and alligators seldom molest a crowd, probably because they object to splashing and like a quiet meal.

Bonanza and I were amongst the first to reach dry land.

"Do you know how those men came by their deaths?" I asked him.

"I don't know," he answered with a strong emphasis on the "know."

"Have you any idea?"

"Well, Diego was away for two hours during the night, so you may draw your own conclusions, and if he did it he deserves our thanks, for if those rascals had got to San Fernando we should not be here now, nor perhaps alive."

I had a strong suspicion that the Zambo had not gone alone, but I said no more. Calzada and Lucar doubtless deserved the fate that had befallen them, and if I had objected to killing suspected traitors without absolute proof of their treachery Bonanza would have thought me a fool for my pains. Everybody in Venezuela appeared to act on the principle enunciated by General Arismendez of never sparing an enemy, actual or potential.

"Look out!" cried one of the guerilleros as a dull roar came from the ramparts, and a cannon ball plumped into a sand-bank close behind us.

A general scramble followed, all the band mounting in hot haste and hurrying away.

"Won't you wait for the man you left behind?" I asked Gonsalvo.

"Not I. Laterro must take his chance," he replied, and rode off.

"Well, we will wait for him," said I. "Don't you think we should, Don Ingo?"

"Certainly," was his answer.

"As you please. It's all in the day's work," remarked Bonanza resignedly. "Nevertheless, I don't see that our waiting will do the fellow any good. Ah, there he comes!"

Laterro rode boldly into the river, guiding his horse obliquely up stream so that he might the better breast the current and land at the right place. All went well until they were two-thirds of the way across when a great alligator appeared in front of them, so startling the horse that he reared and swerved, on which Laterro, to save himself from drowning, slipped out of the saddle, but only to meet the alligator, which made for him with wide open jaws.

The poor fellow screamed for help, which we were powerless to render, and struck out for the shore, but it is not easy to escape from a cayman by swimming. We thought Laterro's doom was sealed, and I was averting my face to avoid witnessing the sickening catastrophe that seemed inevitable when a second ball from the ramparts hurtled over our heads and fell between the alligator and his prey with a mighty splash, so alarming the creature that it turned tail and made off. On this Laterro swam after his horse, seized its mane, and in a few minutes the two were on dry land.

A word of congratulation and we were mounted and away. The Spanish gunners had got our range and we had every reason to believe that if we had not been intercepted we should be pursued. But save a few more futile cannon shots nothing further happened, either, as we supposed, because the governor of San Fernando had no horse at his disposal, or knowing that General Paez and his llaneros were not far off, deemed it advisable not to risk an encounter in which the royalist cavalry were sure to be worsted.

Though still among woods we were in a less thickly timbered country than that which we had left behind us, a level country of broad savannahs, interspersed with clumps of trees and bosky glades, and here and there a farmhouse or plantation, all, like the few villages we encountered, wasted by war, deserted and forlorn.

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Gonsalvo and his band had gone their own way, whither and for what purpose we neither knew nor cared.

We rode on in the track of the army until nearly noon when we overtook the rear guard, and presently came up with Bolivar and his staff. It was the most grotesque-looking army and the queerest staff I had ever beheld.

Compared with those Venezuelan soldiers the ragged regiment which Falstaff led through Coventry was gorgeously apparelled. Many of the infantry had not even rags. A pair of crossbelts, to carry his ammunition and his bayonet or machete, an old hat, and an apology for a fig-leaf constituted the whole equipment and clothing of many of these multi-coloured warriors, for like the devils in "St. Anthony's Temptation" they were of every shade and hue and as many breeds and half-breeds as the republic could produce.

Many wore the simple national costume which I have already described, some wore Spanish uniforms, captured from the enemy, and several companies were clad in cast-off militia uniforms brought from England.

The cavalry presented a somewhat better appearance than the infantry, though even of them many were more than half naked, but Paez's guard of honour, a picked body of five or six hundred men, wore serviceable uniforms, yet none of the privates and few of the officers were shod.

As we approached Bolivar several of his officers rode to meet us and asked our business. When I announced that we brought dispatches from Angostura there was great excitement, and Don Iago and myself were straightway introduced to the Chief, who had just ordered a halt for the midday meal and rest, alighted from his horse.

He received us with the high-bred courtesy of a Spanish hidalgo of the blue blood, for Don Simon belonged to the most exalted order of colonial nobility, and after asking a few questions about our journey sat down under a tree to read the dispatches, an opportunity by which I profited to observe his person and study his face.

At this time Bolivar was about thirty-five years old, but looked at least ten years older. His typically Spanish face, begirt with bushy black whiskers, was thin and careworn and expressive rather of patient endurance than stern resolve. His eyes were dark and intelligent, and it was said on occasion could blaze with anger, but in repose they were dull, furtive, and shifty. Except under great excitement he never looked a man in the face, and when speaking he had an unpleasant habit of glancing sideways and turning his head like a hare.

In height the Supreme Chief was perhaps five feet five, rather less than more, his hips were very narrow, and his legs fully answered to Bonanza's description of them, being short in proportion to his body, and his tight-fitting scarlet breeches and wide horseman's boots made their thinness and shortness all the more conspicuous.

For the rest, he wore an English yeomanry helmet, a round-about jacket of blue cloth, with three rows of gilt sugar loaf buttons, and when mounted carried in his hand a light lance with a black bannerol, or pennon, on which were embroidered a white skull and crossbones, and the legend "*Muerte o Libertad*" (Death or Liberty).

The officers by whom Bolivar was surrounded were nearly all men of colour, some of them full-blooded Indians, two black as night, the rest, except one who was almost white, a fantastic mixture of hues and breeds.

Their uniform consisted of a shirt made of handkerchief pieces, as many coloured as Joseph's coat, with wide sleeves, worn outside roomy drawers which reached to a little below the knee, and a hat of split palm leaves with variegated plumes. One colonel, however, sported a silver helmet; another wore a helmet with a casque of beaten gold. Most of the officers carried a lance ornamented like Bolivar's with a death's head bannerol.

All were barefoot, and all wore on their naked feet either brass or silver spurs armed with rowels five or six inches long.

When Bolivar had run through the dispatches he invited me and Santleo to sit down, one on either side of him. Bonanza, whom he had not yet deigned to notice, was talking with the officers, all of whom he appeared to know.

The Chief was very courteous and his manner sympathetic and engaging. He asked us about our journey, and seemed greatly interested in the story we had to tell him. Thinking to put in a good word for Don Antonio I said how useful, bold, and resourceful he had been, and that without his help I doubted whether we should have won through.

"Oh, Captain Bonanza is brave enough, nobody can deny that, but he is very erratic, often acts and speaks foolishly, and I should not advise you to trust him too much," was the rather chilling answer.

Then the General spoke graciously and gratefully of the help he had received from England, adding that his secretary, Colonel O'Leary, was an Irishman, that several British officers were then present with the army, and that he hoped ere long to be joined by a large body of British troops.

"You shall of course have a command, Major Wyvenhoe," he said, turning to me, "unless you would prefer to join my staff for a while."

This offer I accepted as a matter of course. Without giving offence I could not have done otherwise, nor, to tell the truth, did I particularly desire a command in an army which, I felt pretty sure, would be scattered to the winds at its first encounter with the enemy.

"Good! You shall be my second aide," returned the Chief, "and I shall promote Don Iago to major in consideration of his valuable services and the help he has given you in bringing these dispatches."

Santleo made a suitable reply, and we were rising to take our leave when the Chief invited us to join him at his frugal repast, which would be ready in a few minutes.

"I cannot offer you luxurious fare," he observed, smiling, "only a sancoche de gallina (chicken broth) and cold fowl, but both of you have seen war and know what it is to campaign in a country bare of supplies, and I am afraid our commissariat service leaves a good deal to be desired."

Don Iago and I of course protested that we wanted nothing better than sancoche de gallina and cold fowl,

The alligator made for Laterro with wide open jaws.

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which were presently brought, and with them, to my surprise, several bottles of London porter.

"My favourite beverage," said Bolivar. "I drink little else and nothing stronger. I hope you will not find it too warm. It is kept in wet cloths frequently changed so should be in pretty good condition."

It was rather warm, though less so than I expected, and I found it vastly refreshing, but Don Iago who had never tasted malt liquor before pulled a wry face.

"You don't like it? Well, Chateau Lafitte would be better, but unfortunately I have none to offer you. This is very different from a *déjeuner à la fourchette* in the Palais Royal or a luncheon at Limmer's Hotel."

"You know Limmer's Hotel?" quoth I, more surprised than before.

"Yes, it was at Limmer's I had my first bottle of double stout. There used to be a famous waiter there."

"You mean John Collins, head waiter at Limmer's. He is there still, at any rate he was when I left London, and likely to be as long as he lives."

"I remember him well, an amusing fellow whose fame has been celebrated in verse, something like this I think:

"My name is John Collins, head waiter at Limmer's,
At the corner of Conduit Street, Hanover Square;
My chief occupation is filling up brimmers
To solace young gentlemen laden with care.

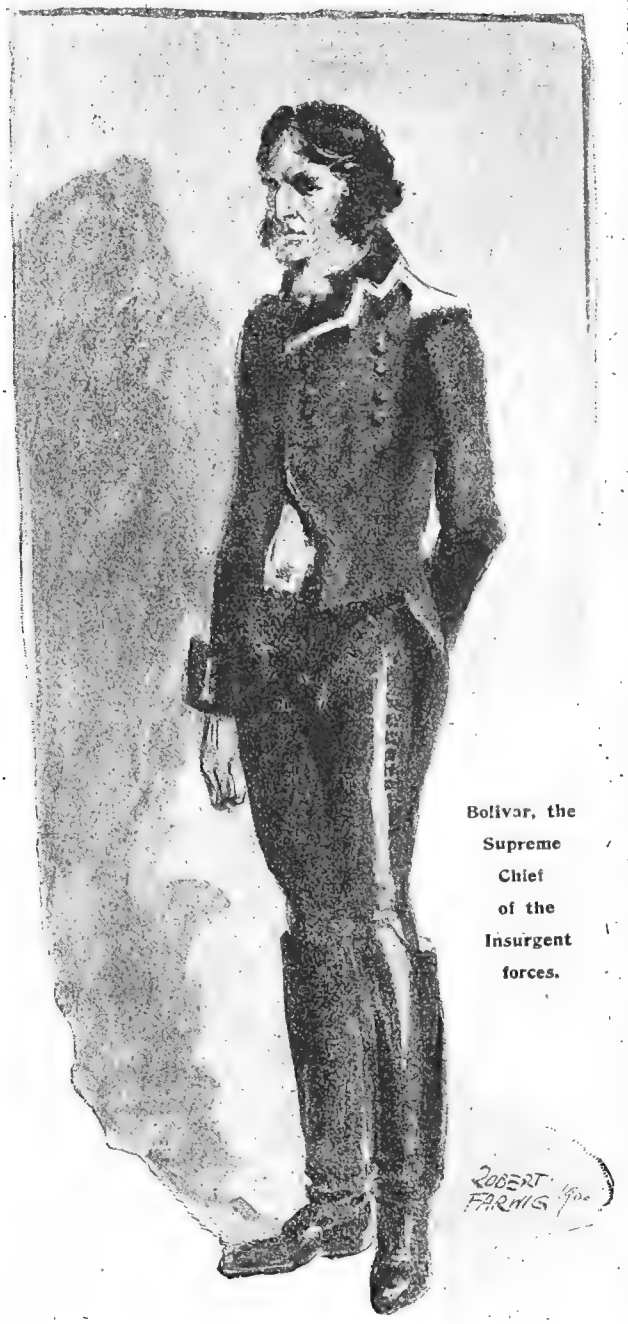
"Do I quote correctly?"

"Quite, and with a good accent. You know English well, Señor General."

"I know French better though," and then he spoke of Paris, where, when he was in Europe, he had made a long stay, and, judging from the stories he told, had led a wild life. "I wish I were there now, and if my country would spare me I would be," he added with a sigh of regret.

When the march was resumed Bolivar kept me with him, but Don Iago, not being included in the invitation, found other company.

"How do you get on with Captain Santleo?" asked the Chief in English, in order, I supposed, that those of his officers who were with us might not know what we were talking about.



Bolivar, the Supreme Chief of the Insurgent forces.

"Very well. We began by being comrades, and are now, I think, fast friends."

"Did he tell you much about himself or his family?"

"Not much—practically nothing."

"So despite your camaraderie and friendship you are no better informed as to his antecedents than any of us. Santleo is a very mysterious gentleman. He entered the army as a private two or three years ago and distinguished himself in several engagements that we gave him a commission, and he is evidently a caballero and a man of some education. But his reticence is extraordinary.

"When asked whence he comes his answer is always either from the west or from the mountains, meaning, I suppose, the Cordillera, which comes to the same thing. The lightness of his complexion adds to the mystery. He is generally mistaken for an Englishman, and if he spoke the language might pass for one. Of course there is a secret, and he must have some motive for guarding it so strictly. What it is I can only conjecture."

"And your conjecture, Señor General?"

"Is very simple and therefore very probable. I think Santleo comes from Grenada and that he belongs to one of those fanatically loyal families who would rather perish than renounce their allegiance to Spain, and that this young man, sympathising with the patriots, enlisted under a false name, unknown to his people, after telling them, perhaps, that he was going to travel in Europe or North America. That would account for a good deal. As for his light complexion that, after all, is nothing. Most men of our blood are dark, but there are blonde Spaniards, and his mother may be English, or German, or an American of the North."

This was a plausible theory, though it failed to explain why, if Santleo had learnt English from his mother, he did not say so, nor why, seeing how intimate we had become and how unreserved on my part had been our intercourse, he refrained from telling me in confidence something about his family and something more about himself.

"I may be mistaken, for all this is pure conjecture,"

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Bolivar continued. "Nevertheless, I think my guesses are not very wide of the mark. Curiosity is one of my weak points. I like to know all about people, especially about my officers, and if Santleo tells you aught of his past and his connections, or you can worm anything out of him, you will perhaps be good enough to inform me."

This was an awkward request. I had no intention of trying to surprise my friend's secret either for the gratification of Don Simon's curiosity or my own. But as saying so might be detrimental as well to Don Iago's interest as my own I answered diplomatically:

"If I do worm anything out of Captain Santleo I shall not fail to inform your excellency."

Bolivar gave me a suspicious side glance as though he detected the equivocation and divined its motive, and, changing the subject, questioned me straitly about Margarita, as to what had happened there during my stay, and the differences between the two generals, of which there was mention in the dispatches.

I answered frankly and fully, being too much incensed against Urdenetta either to disguise my sentiments or keep aught back, telling him all that had befallen, how well I had been treated by Arismendez, how ill by Urdenetta, against whom I made a formal complaint for arresting me on a trumped-up charge without asking me a question or giving me a hearing.

"General Urdenetta must have been misinformed, and I think I could guess by whom. He is a particular friend of mine and one of our bravest generals, and I think it would be worth your while to preserve silence as to what happened at Margarita and let bygones be bygones," said the Chief quietly and, as might seem, kindly, but there was a nameless something in his tone that told me, and I had no doubt was meant to tell me, that if I desired to retain Bolivar's favour I must keep on good terms with his friends.

(To be continued.)

SAVING THE CIDER.

Mr. Hathaway, Mr. Leffingwell, Mr. Anderson, and Mr. Sherwood are four gentlemen who board together, and are the best of friends. The other day they invested in a cask of cider, and at supper that evening sampled its contents.

"One thing is certain," said Mr. Hathaway emphatically, "forty gallons of cider won't keep while we're drinking it. There must be something to put in it to keep it from spoiling, and I've heard that mustard seed is the article."

"I agree with you," observed Mr. Leffingwell. "If we don't take care of it the cider will go sour; but I incline to the idea that horse-radish is the best. Put in horse-radish, and your cider will keep any time."

"Let me remark, gentlemen," said Mr. Anderson, wiping his moustache, "that raisins are what you want. Dump in plenty of raisins, and you've got your cider as long as you want it. Don't you think so, Sherwood?"

"I can't say I do," rejoined Mr. Sherwood. "There is no doubt that the cider will spoil unless you put in something, but what you want is borax. A pound of borax will keep that barrel of cider until winter."

Each gentleman sustained his view with potent arguments, but the dinner was finished before any conclusion was arrived at, and the party separated.

"They can talk about their borax, and raisins, and horse-radish till they're grey," said Mr. Hathaway, as he flopped out of bed at daylight the next morning, "but I'll have my mustard seed in before they roll over," and cautiously stepping downstairs he extracted the bung and poured a liberal dose of the seeds into the barrel. "That will keep," he muttered "for six years," and driving the bung home he went back to bed.

"It's clear to my mind that Hathaway is trying to save that cider by faith," muttered Mr. Leffingwell, an hour later, as he groped round for his clothes. "Mustard seed! Why, he might as well put in melon rind. I'm going to fill that barrel with horse-radish before he's up, and show him how to keep cider. Mustard seed! I'll head a subscription list with a sovereign to test his sanity."

And Mr. Leffingwell shivered down to the cellar and cracked away with a hammer until the bung flew out like a bullet. "There!" he ejaculated, as he poked the horse-radish in with his thumb, "that'll do the business," and with chattering teeth he prowled back to his room.

"One would think to hear these people talk that they'd been brought up in an orchard," said Mr. Anderson to himself as he jabbed the right foot into the wrong slipper. "Borax! Horse-radish! Mustard! What that cider wants is raisins, and that's what it's going to get."

Upon which Mr. Anderson crept down into the cellar, and inoculated the barrel with a couple of pounds of raisins. "It's beginning to spoil already," he soliloquised, eyeing the floating seeds and radish suspiciously, but without identifying them. "If I hadn't been quick we'd have been drinking vinegar by this evening." And, satisfied that he had saved the beverage, he went back to the sheets.

"What I'm afraid of," remarked Mr. Sherwood, as he opened his door and slipped downstairs, "what I'm afraid of is that those fellows will begin to tinker with that barrel before I can get there. If they manage to stick their foolishness in first I'm done, but if I can empty in this borax before they're about there's so much cider saved."

Mr. Sherwood belted away at the barrel until the bung toppled out, and in went his borax. "That's the business," he observed with great satisfaction as he replaced the bung. "It will teach those boys not to be so dogmatic with their remedies hereafter."

"I don't believe that cider was very good in the first place," said Mr. Anderson, as he pushed his glass from him that night at supper. "We got swindled about that cider."

"I think so," said Mr. Sherwood. "It had a very bad taste when we tapped it. It isn't fit to drink now."

"It certainly is not," observed Mr. Leffingwell severely. "It is not good cider. We couldn't have put anything in to keep it. What do you think, Hathaway?"

"I had my suspicions of it from the first," replied Mr. Hathaway. "It's old stock, and I think we'd better give it away."

And then there was silence, and each gentleman wondered if it would not have been better to have let the other gentlemen try their various recipes before zealously administering his own.

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SHORT STORIES ABOUT CATCH PHRASES.

We devote, every week, two pages of *Short Stories* to pithy, humourous anecdotes similar to those which appear in these columns. A prize of £1 1s. will be sent to the reader who submits the best storyette this week, and a copy of "Three Women and Mr. Frank Cardwell," by W. Pett Ridge, to each of those whose attempts are used. The anecdotes may be either original or selected; in the latter case the source *must* be stated. The prize of One Guinea offered for the best Storyette in this competition has been won this week by Mr. A. E. Thomas, 34 South Road, Kingswood, Bristol. Attempts this week must deal with Stories about DUSTMEN, and must reach the Storyette Editor, *Short Stories* Office, Henrietta Street, Strand, London, W.C., by Monday, October 1st. Post-cards only, please.

Mr. Bowser and the £10 Note.

BOWSER was taking Mrs. Bowser for a walk in town the other day, when he was accosted by a nervous-looking individual, who was carrying a copy of *Pearson's Weekly*.

"Excuse me, sir," said the man, "but have you got that Ten-pound note?"

Bowser glared at him wrathfully for a full half-minute before replying, and then the torrent burst forth.

"Now look here, my man," said Bowser, "you are the nineteenth fathead who has asked me that question this week. Confound your impudence! Do you take me for a travelling missionary box, or do you think I am an automatic machine, that only requires a penny in the slot to deliver ten-pound notes like chocolates?"

Turning to Mrs. B., he went on: "I can't get any peace in the town, let's get right away to the restful country, where they haven't heard of this mad scheme of *Pearson's*."

Next day accordingly they went. The first man they met was Dusty Jim, sitting on a head of stones by the roadside, reading a copy of *P.W.*

"Say, mister," said the tramp, "have you got that ten p——"

Before he could finish, Bowser had rushed at him, but, profiting by experience, Dusty Jim fled.

A. E. T.

A Prophetic Retort.

SOME years ago when the catch phrase "Does your mother know you're out?" was on everybody's lips, a bye-election took place at one of our northern constituencies.

One of the candidates for Parliamentary honours was a noble lord of extremely youthful appearance, and on this alleged weakness his opponents taunted him on every possible occasion.

A few days before the election he was addressing a meeting, and was just warming to his subject when he was interrupted by one of his opponents exclaiming:

"I say, boy, does your mother know you're out?"

"Yes, she knows I'm out," retorted the youthful candidate, "and I venture to prophesy that if she's living at this time next week, she'll know I'm in."

The effect of his words on the audience was electrical, and during the cheering which followed the would-be heckler contrived to make himself scarce.

Better still, the prophecy was fulfilled to the letter, for on the day of election he was returned as member by a substantial majority.

A. V.

The Ten-Pound Note Again.

IT was in a railway carriage two scowling men sat one on each side of the carriage, brooding darkly. What was it they contemplated? At first they glared at each other, and then cast down their eyes. The man on the right muttered and said. "It has been on my mind all day. Dare I do it?" The man on the left to himself did say: "Shall I screw up courage and chance it now?"

They both clenched their fists and fidgeted about, and then, suddenly bringing forth a paper with a red cover, they flourished it in each other's faces, yelling:

"Have you got that ten-pound note?"

O. E.

They All Came.

BIFFKINS is dead against catch phrases since he invited his Uncle George to spend a week with him.

"Look me up any time, uncle," he said one day, "and I shall fix you up for a week easily."

"What about the missus, an' childers?" said the cautious uncle.

"Oh, never mind them," said Biffkins, smiling, "'let 'em all come,'—good-bye."

The result of Biffkins using this catch phrase was that Uncle George, the missus, and eight of a family turned up, and Biffkins had to bear it.

W. H.

Too Sharp.

A FEW weeks ago, at a certain seaside resort, I was in a music-hall. One of the audience, evidently trying to be witty, called out: "There's 'air!"

The comedian, pulling off his hat and showing an abundant crop of hair, exclaimed:

"You didn't expect to see feathers, did you?"

R N.

What the Officer of the Watch Said.

A BURLY tar was recently called up to give evidence at a court-martial.

Ex: "Were you on the bridge at the time the ship ran ashore?"

Jack: "Yus, sur, I wor."

Ex: "What did the officer of the watch say?"

Jack: "Wal, sor, seein' as 'ow what he said warn't regulation like, I dunno as 'ow I orter say."

Ex (flaring up): "Now, sir, on your oath inform this Court immediately, all you heard the officer of the watch say at the time the ship struck the bottom."

Jack: "All I 'eard 'im remark, sor, was, 'Watto she bumps!'"

C. R. F.

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SOME OTHER LITTLE STORIES.

A Hard Bull.

Bowser: "Where's that fierce bull you had last time I was down here—the one that tossed me into the duck-pond?"

Farmer: "Oh! yes, I know; I've had a lot o' trouble over that beast. I left the gate open one night, thinking the critter would stray on to the railway and get cut into mincemeat, and then I'd send in a heavy claim to the company."

Bowser: "Didn't work, eh?"

Farmer: "Not exactly. The darn thing charged the engine and threw the blessed train off the rails, and now the company is suing me for damages." E. C.

The Cheque was Incomplete.

"Here is a poem which you may publish in your paper," said a young man with eyes in a fine frenzy rolling, as he entered the editorial room. "I dashed it off rapidly in an idle moment, and you will find it in its rough state, as it were. You can, of course, make such corrections as you think necessary."

"Ah, much obliged," said the editor. "I will give you a cheque for it at once."

"You are very kind," said the contributor. "I shall be delighted."

"There you are," said the editor, giving him a cheque.

"Many thanks," exclaimed the young man; "I will bring you some other poems."

When he got to the door he suddenly paused; then he came back.

"Excuse me," he said, "but you forgot to fill up the cheque. You have not written the date, you see, nor the amount, nor have you signed your name."

"Oh," said the editor, "that's all right. You see, I have given you a cheque in its rough state, as it were. You can, of course, make such corrections as you think necessary."

He Obeyed Too Literally.

"Now, Harry," said the bride, "I want you to understand distinctly that I do not wish to be taken for a bride. I am going to act exactly as if I were an old married woman. So, dearest, do not think me cold and unloving if I treat you very practically when there is anybody by."

"I don't believe I can pass for an old married man. I am so fond of you that I am bound to show it. I am sure to betray myself."

"No, you mustn't. It's easy enough. And I insist that you behave just like old married men do. Do you hear?"

"Well, darling, I'll try, but I know I will not succeed."

The first evening of their arrival the bride retired to her chamber, and the groom fell in with a whist party, with whom he sat playing cards until four o'clock in the morning. His wife spent the weary hours in weeping. At last he turned up, and met his grief-stricken bride with the hilarious question:

"Well, ain't I acting the old married man well?"

She never referred to the subject again, and everybody knew after that they had just been married.

The Infant Again.

"Why do your part your hair in the middle?" said Mrs. Jones to Mrs. Brown. "It is not nearly so becoming as at the side. I used to part mine in the same way until I knew better."

The conversation then became general, and Mrs. Williams told how she used to do her hair, and Mrs. Jenkins lamented the bad taste of the present styles of hair-dressing.

The only lady who did not join in the conversation was Edith's mother, who sat silent in the corner. Evidently Edith did not like to see her mother ignored, as she thought, for presently her little voice was heard to exclaim:

"My mother parts her hair on the table!"

G. A. F.

From Sunshine to Storm.

The other day an Irishman went to his late employer's house and said cheerfully:

"Good morning, sor. Begorra, you're a gentleman," shakes hands with him; "shure yer woife's a perfect lady," shakes hands with her; "yer daughter's a little angel," takes her up in his arms and kisses her; "and yer dog's a beauty," pats dog on the head.

"Well, Pat," said his employer, "I must thank you kindly for your compliments, but I am very sorry to say I have no work for you this morning."

"What!" exclaimed Pat aghast, "no work? Then yer an ould pig; yer woife's a female alligator; yer daughter's a baboon-faced haythen, an' yer dog's not worth cats' meat," and then he bolted. M. A. B.

To Reclaim His Brother.

An unpopular German, who has long stuck to the position of cashier in a mercantile office, is loud in his praises of conscription, and does not spare the feelings of the British clerks beneath him.

"You keep saying we are afraid of compulsory service," retorted a plucky junior once, "and that we should funk the fighting when it came, but how about yourself? Have you ever stood your chance at the ballot?"

This was a facer, and the German flushed and hesitated, but soon recovered himself.

"Ach! no," he exclaimed. "It is true I never wore my country's uniform, but I did not run away. I came to find my brother, who lost heart and fled from the conscription many years ago. I don't know where the coward is—the world is wide—but I shall find him before I die, and send him back to serve the Fatherland. Ah, yes! Even if I have to pay his passage home, he shall not escape." R. A. H. G.

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Other photographs will be enlarged for 7s.

Full particulars have already appeared, and will appear again shortly. They also appear in the current issue of

THE CURIOSITY SHOP.

A coupon from that paper must accompany each order.

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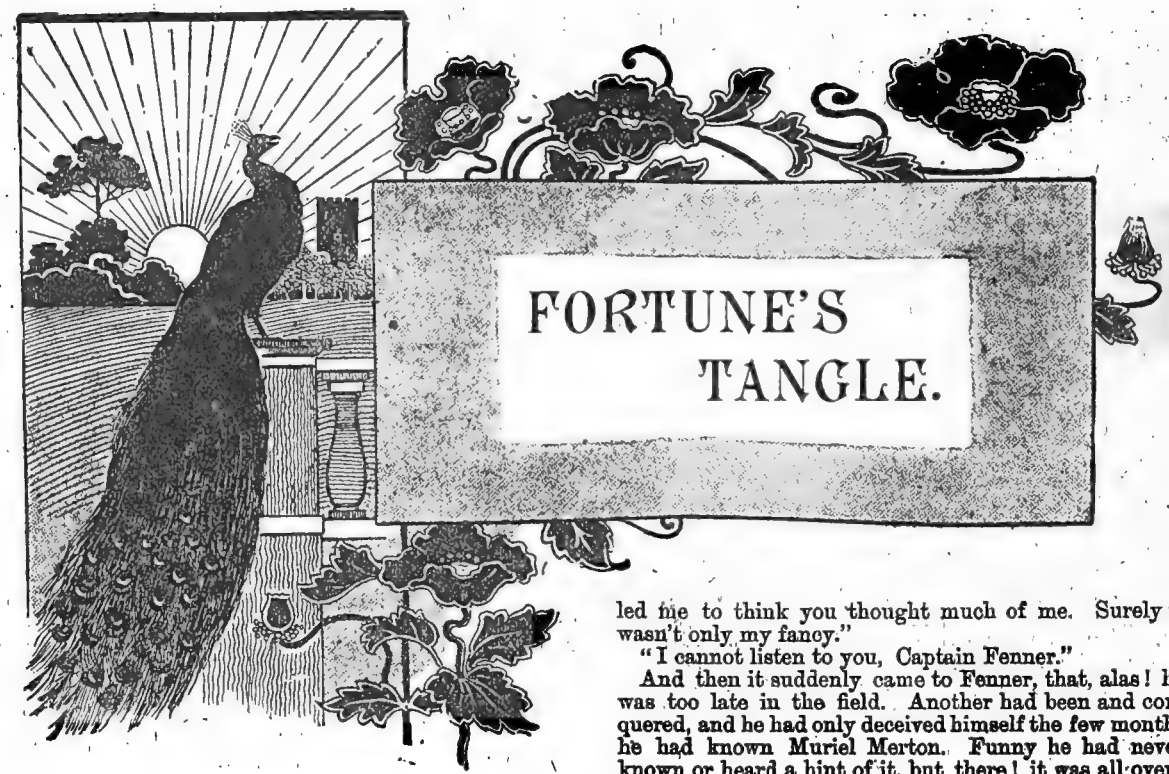

FORTUNE'S TANGLE.

THE windows looked over the waters of the Western Pacific, and Fenner in this crucial moment could not help comparing their perfect blue with that of Muriel Merton's eyes.

They were alone—by a wished-for disposition of Providence; and he, in the few minutes succeeding the participation in tea which never seems so refreshing as in China, determined to put his fate to the test, and to ask her the question which she had shown herself almost waiting for some days before.

Lately, however, ever since the evening young Merton made such a fool of himself after mess and lost some hundreds to the Major, she had treated Fenner much less warmly. Hence perhaps, his sudden determination.

The remembrance reminded him of some tale of young Merton's suddenly going to Pekin, of which he had not taken much notice.

This however, again sank into oblivion before his present thoughts.

She turned very pale as he spoke and clutched the side of the window as if for support. She seemed to be afraid to look at him then.

"No, Captain Fenner, it is very kind of you to do me—"

"Don't call it honour, Muriel; say, oh! say you do love me, you must have seen—"

"I cannot marry you, I simply cannot," and she moved away.

He was sorely puzzled. The tone of her voice was not that of a girl who meant what she said, and yet it all seemed so stereotyped. He stepped forward.

"Why? Tell me why! You have, meaningly or not, led me to think you thought much of me. Surely it wasn't only my fancy."

"I cannot listen to you, Captain Fenner."

And then it suddenly came to Fenner, that, alas! he was too late in the field. Another had been and conquered, and he had only deceived himself the few months he had known Muriel Merton. Funny he had never known or heard a hint of it, but there! it was all over; and yet—he had grown to love her more than he had ever thought he could love anyone. Well, well, he could forget her, perhaps. He felt a feeling almost of resentment that she had not told him of this attachment—such is the illogical and inconsistent reasoning of man.

Yet how different would have been his thoughts had he but known.

Muriel Merton apparently cool, and austerely collected, though with a certain sympathy in those blue eyes, went out of the room, rushed to her own room and threw herself headlong on her bed, and burst into tears of misery.

"To think he would be so mean, and I did— I do love him so much. Oh! how could he take advantage of poor Hugh's weak will and make him play, play, play. Oh! those vile cards, and we're so poor, too. Oh! it was mean, mean."

And here was a pretty little complication so dear to Dame Fortune's heart; Muriel under a mistaken impression, and Fenner fancying himself too late.

Fenner walked back to his quarters, moodily accompanying some brother officers. Their conversation scarcely interested him save that the name Merton made him give a listless sort of attention to it.

All he gathered was that Merton had been very much in the dumps for the last day or two and had suddenly applied for leave to go to Pekin, in fact had gone that morning. They could only explain that it was something to do with that money he had lost and of course must pay Major Crookes.

The Mertons' had an uncle, a prominent personage in the English Legation, and the men guessed it was to him he had gone.

Fenner had only recently arrived in China from

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home on his way to a military post at the Pekin Legation, and had been detained by orders from home in Faihi. China for a year or two had been a smouldering heap, ready to burst into flame at the least fanning. The European Ministers were helpless in face of the machinations of the Empress whose position had been won at the expense of the lives or imprisonment of others of the Imperial family.

Joint letters were of no avail to stem the tide of rebellion against all order and rule, and especially against foreign interference, which a huge section of the Celestials were resenting very practically.

For some days Fenner saw no more of Muriel and then he heard that she, too, had gone on to Pekin. Mrs. Hawley, her boon companion told their mutual friends she had gone on a visit to this same uncle, though Fenner, among other wild ideas, thought his successful rival might be a Pekin Englishman or, but scarcely possible, that she had gone to avoid himself.

Outside Pekin more anxiety was felt for the Europeans than those in the capital itself, and it was being felt advisable to leave the city unless kept there by actual business.

The people of the Pekin Legations, however, could see no immediate danger, and only awoke to reality when the German Ambassador had been assassinated and the way to the coast was practically blocked by rebels.

Just before communication was cut off, a letter arrived from Merton to Mrs. Hawley, throwing everyone into consternation by asking why he had not heard from Muriel who, he thought was coming up, and saying that none of his letters had been answered.

Muriel not in Pekin? What had happened? and everyone was dumfounded. She had certainly left with the intention of going to Pekin, and she—yes, there was no doubt—she must have fallen into the hands of the Boxers either en route, though that seemed impossible before the line was touched, or on arrival at Pekin.

No fiercer, more uncontrollable fanatic lives than the hardly-roused Chinaman, and many feared that the worst had befallen the girl. Fenner became almost a raving madman. Nothing could be thought of for a moment, till someone suggested the most likely thing was that the girl had been entrapped en route, and if alive was in one of the monastries, the most impenetrable buildings in China.

Fenner needed no more suggestions, but for want of a better clue laid himself out to follow up this hazy chance.

* * * * *

The Mandarin Ku Lu was a *persona grata* at the Manling Monastery where the High Priest Kung Chin had been Ku Lu's friend for many years. Ku Lu was a person of much importance in the province of Faihi, and as such had come into continual contact with the English quarter residents. It is necessary for the climax of my story to retrace our steps thus a little, for it was owing to the Mandarin's headstrong infatuation for Muriel Merton, which was quite unsuspected, that the after occurrences took place. The old Chinaman—not so very old though, after all—knew it was useless to expect to make the English girl his wife with the consent either of her or of her friends; and for some twelve months he had nursed his desires in secret. Time would doubtless have increased Ku Lu's discretion, and he would have learnt to put the idea aside. The Boxers' rebellion, however, had furnished the wily old Chinaman with—if not a pretext—certainly a blind wherewith to baffle his pursuers.

And so it was that the unprotected girl had with little trouble been wheedled away from the train on the way to Pekin and had been placed in the charge of Kung Chin at the monastery.

It was unfortunate for Ku Lu's plan that an English official at the particular station remembered, when Fenner's investigations brought him there, one or two circumstances which made Fenner fasten his attention upon the Manling Monastery. How to reach it he knew not. He dared not report the matter for fear of its being a mistake or that he might bring the fanatical Chinese near Faihi to still more heat. And he puzzled his brains for days while the vague tales of horror from Pekin and the threats of the scarcely quiet provincial population almost unnerved all the Europeans.

Some ten days after it was known that Muriel Merton had disappeared, a Chinaman, evidently a high functionary, made his appearance at the gate of the Monastery praying for admittance and an interview with the High Priest on grave matters. Though the order of Confucians to which the monks belonged was not so strict as some others, it was very difficult for even a Chinaman to be admitted, and it was only on persuading the officials that he was sent by the Imperial Court in connection with the rebellion, that Fenner, thus disguised, was admitted. He entered the awful presence of the High Priest with his life in his hand, for he had not been able to formulate any plan, and he felt convinced that time was the chief object. I say, he entered the presence, but he had to wait till Kung Chin came in, and in the meantime was astonished to recognize the Mandarin Ku Lu leave the room as he came in. The Mandarin disappeared behind a heavy awning, and for the minute or two in the deathlike silence of those present Fenner could hear voices in the apartment beyond.

The prostration of the few monks assembled—in masks—called his attention to the entry of the High Priest. Fenner prostrated himself. The High Priest—as autocratic as the Emperor himself—demanded his errand. In short, jerky sentences which by their very formality passed muster, Fenner announced that the Aunt of the Son of Heaven wished to know whether His Holiness was at all disposed to mediate with the Boxers if they rose in that province. Fenner was all ears at the same time, for he had an impression that he had heard English sentences behind the awning.

Now Fenner had rather reckoned without his host, for Kung Chin knew that the Empress was behind the Boxers and was practically as well as morally encouraging them. Fenner's want of forethought almost deserved a fatal issue, for he had entered the place quite blindly, only hoping for inspiration on the spot. He had, however, taken the one precaution which was his salvation. He had left word with his friends that if missing, there he was to be searched for and the limit of time was two days.

It needed very little investigation before Kung Chin gave orders for the imposter to be seized. He had to be taken to his dungeon through the apartment into which Ku Lu had disappeared.

Imagine his surprise to see Muriel Merton, pale with fright and misery, trembling before the mandarin. Ku Lu hastened forward to find out the cause for the disturbance, and in the midst of the scuffling, Fenner revealed himself to the girl by calling her by name. His

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disguise, being disarranged, however, as it was, it needed little trouble for the wily Ku Lu to recognise him.

Quick as thought the cunning old Chinaman had thought of a diabolical plan. Evidently this foreign devil was known to Muriel; was even, perhaps, her lover. Her submission alone should save his life.

Dragged off to his dungeon and disarmed, Fenner felt helpless. He could almost see through the mandarin's designs, however. His expectations were realised when he was visited by Ku Lu, and the latter's nefarious scheme unfolded to him. Then his naturally ready wit came to his rescue. He was informed that each day the girl refused to comply with Ku Lu's wishes he should be tortured as only Chinese know how to torture. He asked to see her, and while endeavouring to influence her he, unnoticed, managed to get her to promise the mandarin to give him her final answer in five days, without letting her think he should suffer for it. The gratitude in her looks to him made him more her devoted slave than ever, but the fixed idea that she was promised to another and had no love for him, had taken very deep root and he could only, from blind love for the girl, suffer.

The details of the sufferings poor Fenner went through are not necessary; suffice it to say that the fourth day saw him nearly succumb. In the time that he was alone on the fourth day, all his poor limbs racked with awful anguish, a sudden commotion in the building accompanied by heavy firing from inside told him that the English troops had arrived and were bombarding the place, their admittance being refused.

His first thought was for Muriel. Would the brutes do her any harm in vengeance? The door opened and Kung Chin thrust the girl inside, telling her in English in his hurry that her English friend was evidently dying, and that was what her non-compliance had caused, and his death could only result from her continued obstinacy.

But the mandarin was too sanguine. The English soon had the place at their mercy.

* * * * *

"Don't trouble about me, Miss Merton," said poor Fenner, as he lay in the camp outside when the storm was over, "I shall be all right."

"But I do trouble about you. I know now—I want to——"

"No, no! don't thank me. Be happy, forget me," mumbled Fenner, his one idea again coming uppermost.

"I can't, I can't be happy without you. Tell me you still love me," she sobbed.

Cobwebs and misunderstandings were soon swept away, and Fenner's unreasoning love had its reward.

Stuart Blofeld.

Young Mr. Fitts (at breakfast): "You look annoyed, my dear. Is it anything I have done?"

Mrs. Fitts: "——."

Mr. Fitts: "I say, is it anything I've been doing?"

Mrs. Fitts: "——."

Mr. Fitts: "For goodness sake, don't sit there dumb. What's the matter with you this morning, anyway?"

Mrs. Fitts: "You were talking in your sleep last night, and—and——boo-hoo!"

Mr. Fitts: "And I said——"

Mrs. Fitts: "And I listened and listened as hard as I could, and you wouldn't say a single word that I could understand. There!"

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A DIAMOND RING.

If any one had told my friends that I was possessed of the slightest spark of romance at the age of forty-five, the information would have been received as a base canard. A bachelor of that age who has drifted about with all sorts of people and had all sorts of adventures is pretty sure to have had all romance knocked out of him.

He thinks more of his hat than his heart and more of his pipe than the female sex. Yes, I was a hardheaded, practical man, and had the most beautiful woman on earth attempted a flirtation with me I should have scowled on her.

That was the sort of man I was, and I gloried in it, but, alas, no man can tell just what day in the week he is going to fall over his own feet and make an ass of himself.

On a certain Tuesday I took a train at Elmer Junction for London, and as there were but few passengers I had a compartment to myself. I had been busy with a newspaper for half an hour when I noticed a small package lying under the opposite seat. I found it to be a plain cardboard box and was prepared to find a free sample of cocoa or a new brand of cough drops inside. It was something different, however.

It was a lady's diamond ring made up of five stones of the purest water, and on the inside were the initials "B. P." The ring was a double hoop of gold and had probably been made to order.

It was lying loosely in the box, and the box had once contained steel pens. I argued that it must have been some careless person who carried a valuable ring about in that fashion and that it had been lost by a passenger who had left the train at the junction.

I am only a fairly honest man. My first idea was to keep the ring and sell it, but I remembered that I was known to the railway porter and that the property might be traced to me. If not strictly honest, I am prudent, and I therefore gave up the idea of realising the ring. I would keep it for a reward, however. That bauble must have cost at least fifty pounds, and was perhaps valued beyond price as a gift. I calculated that I ought to get ten pounds out of it, and I calculated just what I would do with that extra money.

Half an hour later I felt a curious sensation stealing over me. I began to feel sentimental. I began to connect that dear little ring with a dear little golden-haired, blue-eyed girl. I got up and kicked myself three times and called myself a fool, but the feeling did not go away. To my astonishment and indignation I found it growing stronger, and before I knew it the grip of romance had got me by the neck.

I was a man of leisure, though I had no great amount of money to my credit. I would hunt up the owner of that ring, and if everything went well I would marry her. I settled on that, even as I kicked myself again. Common sense told me that I might better fall in love with the old apple woman at the Waterloo terminus, but when romance takes hold common sense has to let go.

For a week I watched all the papers, but the ring was not advertised. This seemed to prove to me that the loser was either rich and indifferent to her loss, or for some reason the loss had not yet been discovered.

Romance made me anxious, and I therefore went to the expense of advertising in five different papers. I simply stated that a diamond ring had been found in a railway carriage and asked the loser to correspond.

Inside of three days I received about one hundred and fifty letters in reply. They came from all sorts of places and from all sorts of people. The number of stones was given all the way from one to ten, and almost every railway in the kingdom was mentioned. The one hundred and fifty writers knew nothing about the ring, and the true loser had not answered me. I was a bit nettled at this neglect on her part. She was not meeting my romance half way. I advertised a second time, and this time I gave date and day and train.

Again I got a peck of letters, and at least half of them were from people who had answered before. As none of them could describe the ring I was no better off than before. Indeed, I was worse off.

A railway official wrote me that in keeping an article of value found on the line I had made myself a thief, and that he would take great pleasure in seeing me behind the bars.

I was now in love with the loser of that ring. Sentiment had a firm grip on me, and I got all sorts of silly notions into my head. I must see the affair to the end at whatever cost, and the end must be my marriage with the fair-haired Beatrice. That was the name I gave her, and I put her age at nineteen without stopping to reflect that I was probably as old a man as her father.

A third crop of advertisements went out. This time I called it a hoop ring, and I got two hundred replies from losers of hoop rings. In sending out the fourth batch of advertising, I described the ring with the exception of the initials. The replies numbered over four hundred. I also got something beyond replies. A detective followed me to my lodgings and was insulting enough to ask:

"Look here, my man, what sort of a game are you trying to play on the public with that ring?"

"None of your business," I replied in my anger at finding I had been dogged.

"But it is my business," he insisted. "I don't exactly twig your lay, but I'll have an eye on you for the next few weeks and be prepared to make it hot for you."

"If you want to know who I am, go to Brown and Brown, solicitors."

"I'll find out soon enough without any help from them."

For half an hour after he had gone I was too put out to feel much romance, but as I cooled off it came gently stealing back, and I was more than ever determined to find my unknown love.

With that independence which should characterise the actions of a fairly honest man I advertised for the fifth time. This time I asked "B. P." to communicate with me in case she had lost anything.

There was just one hundred and seven "B. P." answers, but among them I selected one which appeared to be genuine. This "B. P." had lost a double hoop diamond ring containing five stones. It had been lost in a railway carriage and was a birthday gift from a dead mother.

I was asked to call at the chambers of a certain solicitor to have the ring further identified. There is

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nothing romantic about calling on a solicitor. It was quite possible, however, that the golden-haired heiress would be at the solicitor's and that all would be well, and so I was there at the appointed hour.

So was a stern-faced and aggressive looking householder, together with a sleek-looking villain whom I at once spotted for a detective and a young woman whose hair was red instead of golden. The ring was speedily identified by the stern-faced man and red-headed girl. "B. P." was Bertha Perkins, and her father and her maid were before me. Perkins was a country squire, and on the night previous to my finding the ring his daughter's jewels had been stolen. The hoop ring was part of the plunder.

Of course, I was ready to hand over the ring, but it wasn't to stop there. That red-headed maid was sure she recognised me as the man who was hanging about the grounds a few hours before the robbery, and that villain of a detective was only too glad to snap the handcuffs on my wrists and hurry me off to gaol.

It took me three days to prove myself a respectable character and an alibi. They had to give me my liberty, but it was grudgingly done, and the detective said he'd have an eye on me all the rest of my days.

Old Perkins had helped the red-headed girl to conclude that I was the robber, and I went down to his country seat to receive an abject apology or pull his nose. He not only refused an apology, but threatened to kick me off the grounds, and the red-headed girl declared that I had a cast in my left eye, and by that cast she would swear to me in any court as a man who would not stop at murder.

There was one more thing to be cleared up. I wanted to find out about "B. P." herself. Was she the golden-haired, blue-eyed girl of my dreams, and was she worthy of my love? I had not long to wait. I was walking from the house to the village when a dogcart knocked me down and rolled me all over the road, and the driver halted to call me a tramp and threaten me with the law. The driver was "B. P." Her hair was dyed, her eyebrows coloured, and her nose turned up. She had a big mouth, and green eyes, and when she drove on she whistled like a man.

C. B. Lewis.

IN A MAD WORLD.

"What a lovely old house!" said the lady.

"But what a terrible condition it has been allowed to get into," said the gentleman.

As it certainly had.

It was set down in the midst of a small, but beautiful park-like demesne. Old elm trees of gigantic height and girth shaded it on every side, except that on the front lawn, hidden from the road by a rustic fence, and an immensely high and thick hawthorn hedge, grew a large, widely-spreading cedar. This gave the name to the house, and as the "Cedars" it had, until within about two years previously, been known as the scene of many a county festivity and revel.

It seemed strange that the owner, Colonel Reuth, should have had no relatives, or rather that such were neither seen nor alluded to, even remotely, by either himself or his servants. Country folk have a way of putting two-and-two together and so here. Spite his artistic tendencies the Colonel would have no picture hung in his house. His especial predilection was for old glass, Venetian, Old English, etc., notably that of the Georgian period.

His collection was esteemed by experts to be the finest in Europe, consisting as it did of some of the rarest examples of old "Kit-kat" club wine-glasses. The inspection and consequent admiration of these, was always an important item upon the programme whenever visitors were present. So it was hinted that the lack alike of pictures and relatives had a more than ordinary significance.

Matters went on in this fashion for some years, but there came a day when without word or warning the Colonel disappeared.

Local conjecture waved rife as to the cause.

Although the Colonel was an admitted bachelor, there were rumours to the effect that at some time or other he had been married. If that were so his wife must have been dead for many, many years; while so far as the quidnuncs knew no children existed.

There was a nephew some said, whom at one time the old man had made much of, but who after an unusually festive Christmastide has ceased to appear at the Cedars. Without doubt a serious quarrel had taken place between the two men, but the nature and practical outcome of it were wrapped in mystery.

So much, however, of the loud war of words in the library was overheard by the servants, as to make it clear that the younger man had deeply committed himself in some way and that not for the first time. The Colonel's last words were:

"Long ago I forswore and discarded the name you have disgraced. You have already made my life a misery and a burden to me! by this last act you have altogether wrecked it!"

Within an hour the delinquent had left the house. The same night, after paying and discharging his whole household, the Colonel, too, departed. Whether he went abroad, or merely hid himself in London, or some other great city none knew. A caretaker was put into the Lodge by the agents to the estate, and curiosity had to be content with general surmise, and much imaginative weaving of probabilities. In the east turret-room, a fitful light might now and again be seen towards midnight, but, inasmuch as the village was a model one, and early hours the rule, it passed unnoticed.

The house was shut up, and where once had reigned brightness, laughter, and all the sun-flecked atmosphere of vitality and warmth, now hovered the brooding influence of desolation and neglect.

The lady and gentleman passed through the rusted, dilapidated gates, and along the leaf-strewn, weed-disfigured carriage drive up to the front door of the house.

The lady was young, piquantly fair, exquisitely gowned in the latest Paris mode, and without doubt the object of adorative attention to her companion.

He was, it was easy to see, a military man, tall, upright, about thirty years of age.

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"Alwyn, it's very nice, you know, but I'm just a tiny bit afraid; it all looks so weird doesn't it?"

"It certainly does. But," looking at his watch, "I wonder where Carstairs can be, it's more than half-an-hour past the time he appointed to meet us here."

"My dear fellow! I've been here an age," came in unimpassioned tones from immediately behind the other.

Ethel uttered a little scream, while Alwyn turned sharply round in the direction of the voice.

At an open window, nearly on a level with the ground, lounged, smoking a cigar, and leaning carelessly with one arm upon the sill, an individual whose personal peculiarities seemed to fit in admirably with his surroundings. He was pale to ghastliness; his eyes piercingly black, and set somewhat unpleasantly close together. This with black hair cropped short, a heavy black moustache, and a nose of the Cæsarian order and proportions, indicated at least a forceful if an unscrupulous nature.

"Oh! Mr. Carstairs! how you startled me!"

"Did I? Sorry I'm sure. Wait a moment, and I'll open the door for you, there isn't a soul about but myself," with that disappearing into the gloom of the room.

"Well," said Alwyn, while they waited, "I always thought Carstairs to be a trifle uncanny, but his appearance in this fashion is dramatic to a degree. He looks the familiar spirit of the place to perfection, doesn't he?"

"He does indeed, dear, I hope, however, he won't be too familiar, and call up his brother spirits."

"I haven't any, Miss Devine, that I am aware of," said Carstairs imperturbably, as the door opening at that instant, he himself stood in the entranceway.

"Mr. Carstairs! if you continue to startle me in this way, you'll really frighten me to death."

"I hope not—but come in. Perhaps you don't know that the owner of this place, Colonel Reuth, is my uncle, and that 'yours truly' is the heir expectant."

"No," returned Alwyn, "is that so? You'll have to spend some money upon it when you do come into possession."

"Oh! I don't know; I rather fancy it in its present state. This is the only habitable room in the house," holding open the door for them to pass in. "The collection of old glass is here, and although you were ignorant of my connection with the owner, at the time I invited you here to see it, you will now understand that as a guide, philosopher, and so on I am in a position to be especially authoritative."

Seyd Carstairs, M.D., was no ordinary man. While walking St. Luke's, the leading London hospital, he had evinced acute perceptive powers, and a faculty for scientific investigation that earned him the approval and encouragement of his chiefs. Toxicoligy and hypnotism were not only his fads but a positive passion with him. More than once had whispers reached the Colonel's ears of shady tricks done in connection with the latter, but until he himself had personally suffered, but little credence had been given by him to the incriminatory rumours.

Since his uncle's strange disappearance he had rummaged the old house for what he could find, and had discovered, among other things, a certain old wineglass, time of the second George, connected with which was a tradition, that fairly harmonised with his own ideas of supernatural influence and power.

Now, as he ushered his visitors into the room, lined round, ceiling-high, with books in rare old bindings, he appeared to be the true presiding genius of the place.

In the centre of the room was a large octagon-topped table of heavy mahogany, black with age, its massive central supporting pillar terminating in three immense feet, carved as dragons.

Upon this table, and in the midst of it stood, upon a large silver salver of ancient workmanship, a slenderly-tall, short-stemmed wine-glass. It was of delicately thin crystal, the rim being engraved with a beautiful running pattern, gold-incised. On its side was also graven the head of a young girl, her hair arranged in the towering fashion of one-hundred-and-fifty years ago. Underneath the portrait ran the legend:

"Charming Miss Jenny Adair! Kit-Kat Club, 1792."

It needed, of course, close inspection to see this inscription clearly.

The moment Ethel's eyes encountered this crystal treasure, she was fascinated, Seyd Carstairs keeping his own gaze fixedly upon her the while.

"Oh! Mr. Carstairs! what a beautiful old glass! May I take it in my hand?"

"Not just yet, please, presently you shall."

"In all the Colonel's collection," said the doctor "this old glass," pointing to the one upon the table, "is the most remarkable specimen. Tradition has it (and from certain documents I have seen, tradition may in this instance be relied upon) that this wine-glass possesses the strange power, when in the hand of a sensitive subject, of revealing (under certain conditions, unnecessary to explain) the fate of the holder through the spirit-lips of its original Georgian owner. It is said its realistic power is so great that the old Sir Carnaby Carstairs of that day appears to the subject to be actually present and speaking."

"How interesting," said Ethel animatedly. "I wonder what he would have to say to me!"

"Nothing but good, I am sure," observed Carstairs smilingly.

"Now I am sure you must be in need of refreshment after your journey here; allow me to give you a glass of wine."

So saying he filled two glasses, but from two separate decanters.

"We will imitate the men of the period when that relic was in nightly use," he said, smiling peculiarly. "Charming Miss Ethel Devine!" lifting his glass high above his head.

"Charming Miss Ethel Devine!" repeated Alwyn, entering into the spirit of the thing.

"Gentlemen! I thank you!" and Ethel sank down in one of those old-world stately curtsies, beloved of our great, great grandmothers, the art of which, except upon the stage, and among the very few, has been lost for ever.

Still the inscrutably peculiar smiling expression on Carstairs' face.

"I don't feel quite well," said Alwyn, suddenly, "it must be this musty old place. I think I'll take a turn in the open air."

"Yes, do," said Carstairs, with a professional air, "the best thing, quite the best thing. "I'll look after Miss Devine."

"Yes, do, Alwyn, and Mr. Carstairs will explain about that glass to me while you are away."

"With pleasure," said Syd, bending his head courteously.

Alwyn Brocklebank had scarce set foot in the corridor when Carstairs, with a swift stride towards the door locked it, putting the key in his pocket.

The click of the turning key caused Ethel to look

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round, and see upon the doctor's face the expression of triumphant devilishness.

"Dr. Carstairs! please unlock that door! I think you are behaving very strangely. Unlock the door at once; I wish to join Mr. Brocklebank."

"Pardon me, you will sit down upon that chair," indicating one with his finger, and fixing his eyes intently upon her own; looking into them as if he would sound their very depths.

Ethel, like a bird held by the eye of some venomous snake, struggled bravely to shake off the influence of Carstairs' fascinating gaze. But in vain.

She walked to, and sat down upon the chair he had pointed out, and although trembling in every limb, submitted dimly to a power she was altogether unable to fight against.

Never taking his eyes from her face Carstairs reached out his hand and took up the wine-glass from the centre of the table. He held it out to Ethel.

"Hold it in your right hand," he said distinctly and deliberately.

She did so, passively, but with a tremor that caused wet beads to break out upon her white brow.

Drawing a chair close to her left side, Carstairs sat down, and lifting her hand, took hold of the thumb, firmly pressing it. He then after making two or three passes before her eyes, with his right hand finger tips, gently, and by a semi-rotary motion, stroked her forehead.

"Do you see anything?" he asked her.

No answer.

"Do you see anything?" in a sharp, angry tone.

"Yes, I see an old gentleman in a strange dress. He has on a wig, a large wig, and a sword by his side. He is coming towards me. He is very grave, but kindly looking. He is sitting now in the large leathern armchair by the table."

"Go on," said Carstairs, stroking her forehead once or twice again gently.

"I can hear his voice now. He is speaking to me. He calls me by my name. He says that he will tell me his own story first. 'I was a member,' he says, 'of the famous Kit-Kat Club, and can remember how Lady Mary Wortley Montague, as a small child of five years, was brought there one evening by her father the Duke of Kingston, and how we all toasted her till she clapped her little hands with glee.'"

"Don't let him run into irrelevant reminiscences," said the doctor, impatiently.

"I have asked him who the girl is whose head is on the glass, and he says:

"'That was our charming Jenny—my Jenny. We never met on club nights but we toasted her in full bumpers. One night my Lord Tregarthen slightingly mentioned her name in connection with mine. I threw a glass of wine in his face. The glass is that you hold in your hand. The next morning at daybreak, we met behind Montague House, and he ran me through the body. He had taunted me with my age, and with her youth. I was certainly an old man compared to her; but old as I was, I could have shielded her from all sorrow and care.'

"He sighs, and opening his coat, shows me a large red stain upon the bosom of his white cambric shirt. He is speaking again. 'You are young and beautiful. Your lover is a good man and true. There will be a brief moment of suspense and agony, and then all will be well. Beware of a dark enemy. He seeks now an admission of love from you. His own love for you is false, cruel, deadly! Be not deceived. Listen not to him. Beware!'"

At this moment the room was violently shaken.

"Open the door at once, whoever is inside," said a stern voice from without.

Carstairs recoiled with a white look upon his face as he recognised the speaker's tones.

"If you don't unlock the door at once, it shall be burst open!"

A moment's pause and then with a thunderous noise, the effect of a heavy body's ramming of the obstruction, the door flew open, in the entrance-way standing a tall, grey-bearded man of distinguished appearance; his eyes fiercely glowing like coals of fire.

Simultaneously with all this, was Ethel started out of her temporary trance, at the awakening moment, dropping out of her hand on to the floor the wineglass, which was shivered into a thousand fragments.

Carstairs made as if to pass by the stranger, and leave the room; but the latter gripped the doctor by the coat collars and held him as in a vice.

"So, Seyd Carstairs, you thought me miles away, did you? When I have been at your elbow here, in the Turret-room, for months, sir, watching your every movement, and witnessing your miserable endeavours—futile, I am glad to say—to get at those papers you and I know of. Young lady," continued the captor, to Ethel, who sat, trembling and white, unable to move, "young lady, I need not ask if this scoundrel, whom I have the honour to call son, has been trying his dastardly tricks upon you. My name is Reuth Carstairs, at your service, and I shall have much pleasure in doing for you everything in my power!"

"Quit your hold of me, sir!" said the younger Carstairs to his father, "or I may possibly forget myself."

"You did that years ago when you sought to clutch at my money, over my body. For a parricide, even but in intent, what mercy can there be? Still, for your mother's sake—for this young lady's sake—I will so far have consideration for you, as to let you go, but on the condition that you leave England within forty-eight hours, never to re-visit it. On this condition, and on this alone, I will remit you, to your order, wherever you name, a yearly sum sufficient to keep you, should you be so inclined, which I very much doubt, out of mischief. Now, sir, relieve us of your presence."

As the baffled man turned to go, Alwyn, roused from his torpor by the uproar and bustle (he had fallen in the corridor on his way to the garden after drinking the drugged wine) met him face to face.

Both young; both hot tempered, the consequences of a personal encounter between the two would have been serious, but the Colonel took the matter into his own hands.

"You!" to his son, "go! and you, sir," to Alwyn, "let an old man advise you, attend to this young lady, who sorely needs your aid. As for that person I have dealt with him, and you will be troubled with him no more for ever."

In a short while Ethel recovered, leaving the house with Alwyn and the Colonel.

She never mentions now the terrible experiences of that day.

The Colonel still lives, and although he has made no definite promises, a little bird has whispered that some day Ethel's eldest son the second Alwyn will reign as master in a rehabilitated and glorified Cedars.

R. E.

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FREE, FREE.

Our £2 10s.

Real Silver Watch

(with chain),

or

A Real Gold Ring

Set with REAL DIAMONDS and other stones.

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NO MONEY REQUIRED. WE TRUST YOU.

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S. S. MURRAY,

7 Southampton Row, London, W.C.

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I was for years; by chance I came across a simple home-remedy that reduced me from 17st. to 10st. 12lbs., and I will willingly send particulars free to any sufferer enclosing stamp. Mrs. L. E. FELL, 195 Oxford Street, London, W.

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Pamphlet on Nervous Diseases of All Kinds. THIS PAMPHLET describes all the symptoms which arise from Diseases of the NERVOUS SYSTEM. It is up-to-date, having been compiled after years of labour and experience in the Treatment of these Maladies. It is complete, practical, and can be readily understood and acted upon. It gives pure and simple advice to Sufferers. Send stamped addressed envelope to GEORGE WRIGHT, Esq., Colne House, REMBRANDT ROAD, LEE, LONDON, S.E. (*Name this Paper.*)

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The Brain Gymnasium

IN these competitions a prize of £2 will be awarded each week to the competitor whose attempt we receive giving the correct solutions of all the puzzles. If more than one is absolutely correct the prize of £2 will be given to the first correct attempt dealt with.

If no lists of absolutely correct solutions are sent in the first prize will be awarded to the competitor whose attempt is first dealt with showing the fewest mistakes.

Each week we shall award in addition to the above, either ten of our silver plated pencil-cases or ten popular novels, to be distributed amongst the competitors whose attempts are absolutely correct and have failed to win the first prize, or, if no complete lists of correct solutions are received, to those whose attempts show the fewest mistakes.

Write all your solutions on one sheet of paper, putting the number against each. Post the batch in an envelope marked "Brain Gymnasium," to reach the Editor, SHORT STORIES, 18 Henrietta Street, Covent Garden, W.C., by first post on Monday, October 8th, 1900.

Readers are invited to submit puzzles, acrostics, conundrums, word-squares, etc., for publication on this page. A gold-plated pencil-case will be given to each reader whose attempts are used. All attempts must be vouched for as original, and, of course, it is distinctly understood that the sender of a puzzle must neither compete in the competition nor divulge to anyone the solution. Any reader found infringing this rule will be severely dealt with.

No. 223.

WHAT is the word which, if spelt forwards, is a measure, backwards a tree, and, transposed, a river in England?

No. 224.

I WAS before the Creation, I still exist in the depths of the earth, and yet a babe can destroy me in a moment. What am I?

No. 225.

THE following letters, when re-arranged, will form a well-known proverb:

AA BB DD EE HHHHH IIII NNN OO RR SS TTTT U WW.

No. 226.

FROM equivalents of the following, form a word-square, the diagonal of which will give the names of two famous cities in the British Isles:

Pure; full of interstices; a plant; a disease on cloth; a bird; an idea.

No. 227.

MY FIRST must surely be my WHOLE,
Although he looks so learned,
He sees not Simpkins with my NEXT,
Each time his back is turned.

And thus, though Simpkin's known to be
My WHOLE, the lazy loon
Will get a wrangler's first degree,
While I, at most, the spoon.

No. 228.

THE initials read forwards, and the finals read backwards, of equivalents of the following, will give the name of something no one can do without:

A flower; a fruit; a kind of pigeon; a reverberating sound; an American root.

RESULT OF BRAIN GYMNASIUM.

Nos. 205 to 210.

THE first prize of £2 has been awarded this week to Miss Isobel Barnes, of 68 Lydford Road, Paddington, W., whose solution was the first correct one dealt with.

A copy of "The Hope of the Family," by Alphonse Daudet, has been sent to each of the following:

W. J. Barter, Cork.
D. Jelly, Plumstead.
J. L. Robertson, Dundee.
George Humphreys, Nottingham.
A. Gresham, South Hackney, N.E.
J. Morris, Oxford.
J. B. Crane, Bognor.
F. J. Porter, Liverpool.
Miss Jessie Whitaker, Barnsley.
H. Amdrus, Beckenham.

SOLUTIONS OF BRAIN GYMNASIUM COMPETITION.

Nos. 211 to 216.

No. 211.

D E W E T
E D I L E
W I G A N
E L A T E
T E N E T

No. 212. Proluberance.

No. 213. "Where ignorance is bliss, 'tis folly to be wise."

No. 214. M.P.

No. 215. OTHELLO LAERTES.

O pa L
T itani A
H eb E
E lixi R
L imi T
L ov E
O asi S

No. 216. SERINGAPATAM.

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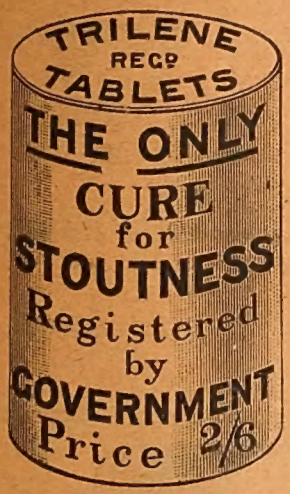
ALL FAT PEOPLE

Can be **CURED** by taking

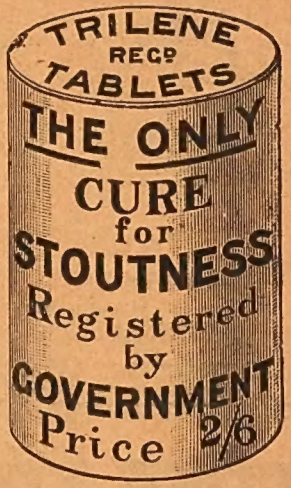
TRILENE TABLETS Regd.



For a few weeks. They will safely REDUCE WEIGHT and CURE CORPULENCY PERMANENTLY, whether Abdominal or General. They are small, agreeable, harmless, sent privately, and never fail to Improve both HEALTH and FIGURE without change of Diet.

An English Countess writes: "Your Trilene Tablets act admirably."

Send **2s. 6d.** to THE TRILENE ASSOCIATION, 66 Finsbury Pavement, London, E.C.



SAMPLES OF TESTIMONIALS.

"87 Alexandra Road, Norwich, October 19th, 1896.

Gentlemen,—In reference to Trilene Tablets, I may say that my wife found the greatest possible benefit from the use of them; their action was rapid, and exceeded our utmost expectations, as they were also most beneficial to the respiratory organs. My wife was many years growing so stout, but although the disease was, I consider chronic, the Tablets soon reduced the same completely. You have our united thanks, and if I can do anything to promote your interests I will freely use my utmost endeavours to do so.

"Yours faithfully, J. B. CANHAM."

MRS. DARNLEY SMITH, Landscove Vicarage, Ashburton, writes: "Trilene Tablets have reduced my weight very much. I am so much lighter in every way, and better in health."

COUNTESS SECKENDORFF, of Berlin, writes: "The Tablets greatly benefited me personally, and I am recommending them to friends."

MISS CHATTERTON, 7 Salisbury Villas, Banstead, Surrey, says: "I weighed 12st. 8lb., but am now 11st. and getting much better."

Nurse CROUCHER, at Mrs. Bennett's, 14 Buckleigh Road, Streatham, says: "I lost 9lb. from the box I took."

"77 Hindhill Street, Heywood, February 5th, 1898.

"Gentlemen,—I have not quite finished the box of Tablets and am 2lb. lighter. The change is great, and several friends are beginning the treatment, which not only reduces fat but strengthens rheumatic joints—such has been the case with me. "Yours sincerely, M. A. HEYWOOD."

MRS. D. BURTON, of Silvercleigh, Tunbridge, writes: "I am very pleased with difference in size, my friends all telling me how much thinner I am getting."

MISS NORTHLEDGE, The Laurels, Riseholme Road, Lincoln, says: "The Tablets reduced me 1st., so that I am cured."

West Cornforth, Ferryhill.

MR. WM. USHER says: "A sister of mine, who was 17st., was greatly reduced by your Tablets to 15st."

Extract from *The Lady*, September 3rd, 1896: "Many stout persons have suffered untold agonies in unavailing efforts to reduce their bulk, either by means of severe dieting, or by taking more or less deleterious drugs; but all these pains would have been saved if they had only invested in a box of the wonderful Trilene Tablets which are quite harmless, containing neither mercury, arsenic, nor any other mineral poison, and which are an unfailing cure for obesity."

MRS. T. BOSTON, Cambridge Villas, Clifford Street, South Wigston, says: "I congratulate you on your wonderful Tablets. My weight at first starting them was 11st. 7lb., and I now weigh 9st. 11lb."

MR. MCLEOD, 44, Calside, Paisley, writes: "I have been cured. If you want to know my weight now, it is 10st.; reduced 1st. 8lb., and I am quite content."

A. M. PRATT of Ongar House, Ongar, says: "My weight is so much reduced it is unnecessary to take more. The reduction of weight was from 12st. 6lb. to 10st. 4lb."

MRS. H. COX, 28 Watnall Road, Hucknall Torkard, writes: "The box of Tablets has reduced my weight 1½ stones."

MR. WALKER, 236 London Road, Hazelgrove, Stockport, says: "I have used one box and am 14lb. lighter. Send another soon as possible."

Col.-Sergt. WHITTLE, of East Lancashire Regt., Burnley, Lancs, says: "A man in our regiment in 1891 lost several stone from taking your Tablets."

MRS E. ALEXANDER, 102 Dixon Street, New Swindon, says: "They have reduced me quite 2 stone, and I am now quite cured."

Mrs. W. A. RADFORD, of High Street, New Brinsley, Eastwood, writes: "Before taking Tablets I was 46 inches round waist, now I am 32 inches. I hope soon to be 23. I could hardly move or get up, now I get about easily. Please use this as you wish."

Countess FURSTENBERG, of Germany, writes: "They act speedily and well."

The Princess LIECHTENSTEIN writes from Landsberg, Austria: "Pray send me your excellent Tablets."

Mrs. WEAVER, of Greenpits Villa, Ross, Hereford, writes "I am reduced from 13st. 8lb. to 11st. You may use this if you like."

MRS. CROSSLEY, of Rose Hill, Torver nr Coniston, says: "There is a very decided diminution of fat. I am delighted, and cannot speak too highly in praise of Tablets. My heart is better, and I can breathe so much easier. You may refer to me as often as you like."

Lady C. CONRAD writes from Wiesbaden: "I am very pleased with your Tablets."

Mrs. TAYLOR-ROBINSON, of Tweed Green House, Whalley Range, Manchester, says: "I feel so much lighter and better since taking your Tablets, and am so much thinner that I hardly recognise myself."

Miss A. LONG, of 9 South Parade, Waterford, writes: "Your Tablets have reduced me 14lb."

Miss A. DAWSON, 62 Orchard Street, Weston-super-Mare, says: "Glad to say the Tablets have sufficiently reduced me. I shall always recommend them."

Miss F. L. BALL, 47 Chesterfield Road, St. Andrews, Bristol, writes: "I am quite cured through your Tablets. They improve the figure, and greatly relieve shortness of breath."

Miss PATIENT, of Woodberry, Theydon Bois: "Feel great benefit from Tablets. I have lost 2st., and am sufficiently reduced."

Mrs. DREW, of 1 Bellevue Gardens, The Nursery, Devizes, writes: "I took Tablets some years ago; they soon reduced me and I have not got stout since. Send me a box for my mother."

THE TRILENE ASSOCIATION, 66 FINSBURY PAVEMENT, LONDON.

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HAIR RENEWER "TATCHO"

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